



EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS: RIGHT AIMS, WRONG APPROACH

Brussels, 25 April 2017

The European Commission will tomorrow adopt a package of social policy proposals regrouped under the so-called EU Pillar of Social Rights. Improving economic and social cohesion is key and BusinessEurope shares the aim of increasing employment and creating more quality jobs across Europe. However, the approach proposed by the Commission will not allow to reach this goal.

The social dimension of the European Union can only work smoothly if it is supported by both social partners (employers and trade unions). Trust between the EU institutions and the social partners is key. The package to be published includes a proposal to repeal a social partners' agreement on parental leave that BusinessEurope negotiated with the ETUC in 1995 and revised in 2010. Repealing this agreement is unacceptable and in contradiction with the spirit of the EU Treaty which guarantees that social partners agreements can only be modified by the signatories themselves. Such a move will severely damage the confidence of the employers in the value of negotiating legally binding agreements in the future.

Commenting on this, BusinessEurope President Emma Marcegaglia said:

“People want more jobs and more prosperity, not ill-conceived legislation undermining job creation.

The parental leave agreement as revised in 2010 imposes far reaching obligations on employers. Going beyond will undermine competitiveness and the issue of social security allowances or other financial compensation mechanisms is of national competence. Many Member States simply cannot afford to grant sickness pay levels to people taking parental leave.

We are now in a paradoxical situation. This EU Commission, who wanted to revive the social dialogue, will actually gravely endanger the key tool allowing for autonomous negotiations between the social partners at EU level. The other paradox is that this Commission who is rightly asking Member States to ensure the sustainability of public finances is proposing unfinanced additional social expenditures.”

This package also has a highly divisive dimension in many parts of Europe. We call on the Council to fix this problem. Protecting the unity of the European Union remains the priority for the European business community.

ENDS

BUSINESSEUROPE



PRESS RELEASE

BUSINESSEUROPE

Contact:

Peter Sennekamp
Director of Communications
168 Avenue de Cortenbergh
1000 Brussels - Belgium
GSM : +32 496 919 315
p.sennekamp@businessseurope.eu

Sofiya Yevchuk
Press and Media Adviser
168 Avenue de Cortenbergh
1000 Brussels - Belgium
Tel : +32 (0) 2 237 65 03
s.yevchuk@businessseurope.eu