

**SOCIAL EUROPE**

- *The human aspect must remain at the centre of economic development: this is why it should result in greater social progress and cohesion. The Treaty sets out that the Union shall work for "a highly competitive social market economy"; the Commission's commitment to achieve a "Social Triple A" is firmly anchored in this model.*
- *A 'triple A' social Europe requires fair and balanced growth that leads to the creation of decent, quality jobs, as well as protection for all throughout their lifecycle. It requires the upward convergence of Member States' economic and social policies, with the aim to reduce inequalities.*
- *Social policy should be based on investment in the human capital. It should enable everyone to have a job, while providing appropriate safety nets, in line with European values.*
- *Europe's mission is also to fight against poverty and social exclusion, in accordance with the Europe2020 strategy. These two issues are taken into account when making recommendations to Member States in the European Semester. The European Social Fund (with 20% dedicated to social inclusion) helps translate these recommendations into reality. Finally, the financial assistance of FEAD (European Fund for the most deprived) targets the most vulnerable persons by giving them material support and food, and/or the possibility to participate in social inclusion programmes.*

***(On integration of migrants)***

- *Integration policies are the remit of the Member States and are not harmonised at EU level. Nevertheless, the Treaty provides a legal base for EU support and incentives to Member States in order to promote the integration of third-country nationals.*
- *On this basis, the EU has been supporting Member States in their integration policies for more than a decade, through EU funding, peer learning activities and policy guidance.*
- *The EU Agenda on Migration was adopted in May 2015. It involves a series of legal, operational and financial actions and proposals, including an Action Plan on the Integration of third-country nationals (June 2016) with a forthcoming Report on its implementation (2018).*

**Background****Challenges:**

**Social consequences of the crisis:** When this Commission came into office, Europe was left with a legacy of youth and long-term unemployment, poverty and social exclusion after its worst economic crisis in decades. While welfare systems have cushioned some of the impact, public finances have been stretched, and national performances have diverged markedly. Growing polarisation between well paid and low paid jobs is feeding inequality. Structural changes in employment have been reflected in the increase in temporary types of employment contracts across Member States. Only 22% of temporary workers manage to access permanent employment. Labour market segmentation is decreasing, but remains high across the euro area.

**The current pace and extent of change in the world of work:** Technology and digitally powered automation are producing long-term shifts in occupations, with half of EU jobs at risk of automatisisation. The share of jobs involving routine tasks is decreasing, while that of jobs requiring digital and high-level problem solving skills is increasing. By 2025, less than 15% of job openings will be for the low qualified.

**Demographic trends:** The EU is predicted to move from having four working-age people for every person aged over 65 years to only two working-age persons by 2060. Health and pension expenditure increased more than social expenditure towards working age adults since 2000. This raises a big challenge for the adequacy and sustainability of social protection.

**Divergence in employment and social performances:** The impact on employment in the euro area has been profound and uneven. Convergence has restarted, but not fast enough to make up for lost ground. The unemployment gap between least and most affected countries increased from 8 percentage points during the crisis to 20pp in 2015. Income inequalities among European households increased in twelve EU countries between 2008 and 2012.

### **Response**

The Commission has already taken measures to strengthen Social Europe, including: rebalancing the social and economic dimensions of the European Semester; tackling youth and long-term unemployment (e.g. Youth Guarantee); improving accessibility to services for all citizens; breathing new life into social dialogue and promoting fair labour mobility.

In the future, the European Pillar of Social Rights will be the reference framework to screen performance of labour markets and social protection systems in participating Member States. Subsidiarity will be at its heart, but the Commission will also bring forward initiatives on Work-Life Balance: to allow men and women to combine work with family life and caring obligations throughout the life cycle; Access to social protection: so that as many people as possible are covered by social security; and a revision of the Written Statement Directive: so that all workers and employers, irrespective of the type of contract, have clarity on their contractual relationship.

### **What we are doing for the integration of migrants**

- increased focus in the framework of the European Semester on integration challenges experienced by migrants (3 MSs received a migrant-specific CSR in 2017: BE, AT, FR);
- exchange of best practices across Member States, through mutual learning activities and peer reviews, as well as an on-line [repository](#) of promising integration practices;
- support through the European Social Fund, which includes language courses, skills identification and vocational training ;
- a "Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals", which assists services in receiving and host countries to identify and document skills, qualifications and experience of newly-arrived third-country nationals.