



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Europe 2020: Social Policies
The Director

ARES 17. 07. 2013

N° ...2692758

Réceptionné le : 19/07/13

Par : SW

Original à : BS

Copies à : CM

REMARQUES :

Brussels,
EMPL.D/LF/

Ms Bernadette Ségol
European Trade Union Confederation
International Trade Union House (ITUH)
Boulevard Roi Albert II, 5
B-1210 Brussels

Dear Ms Ségol,

I would like to thank the European Trade Union Confederation for its Position concerning the Social Investment Package {COM(2013) 83 final}. As you know, the Social Investment Package addresses the increasing levels of poverty and social exclusion, the pressure on public budgets and structural challenges that Europe is facing, thereby addressing many of the concerns you outlined. It sets out an agenda for the modernisation of social policies to help Member States make the reforms needed to respond to these challenges. The EU needs real social investment, and we are grateful for the support of the ETUC towards our package of measures.

You point out that social policy measures that do not directly result in a tangible economic return are useful and important. I agree: social policy has three functions - stabilisation of the economy, investment in human capital, and social protection. Well-designed welfare systems combine these three functions. The Social Investment Package emphasises that social protection should be designed so as to ensure appropriate and dignified livelihoods. At the moment we see that the adequacy of minimum income schemes can still be improved in some Member States. To support this, the Commission is currently developing a methodology for reference budgets to aid Member States in the design of adequate minimum income schemes.

Since adequacy and sustainability are two sides of the same coin, the SIP also addresses the efficiency and effectiveness of social policies. At the moment we can see that Member States with similar budgets achieve different outcomes. This suggests that there is room for improving the way resources are used, and ensuring the effectiveness of policy interventions in achieving their desired outcomes. Policy reforms to improve efficiency and effectiveness can notably be achieved through simplifying benefit administration and creating one-stop shops to access support, as well as striking an appropriate balance between universal social policies, aimed at promoting the well-being of all, and targeted approaches aimed at supporting those most in need. It may also be appropriate in some

Member States to introducing conditionality for certain types of benefits and putting increased focus on preventative measures.

The SIP fully recognises that social policies are mainly a Member State competence. However, it is also clear that modernising social policies is a matter of common concern, since ineffective social policies in one country can have consequences for another country. This is why the Commission has addressed the modernisation of social policies and the increased focus on social investment in this year's CSRs and will address this in future European Semesters. Further, the Commission is working on strengthening the Social Dimension of the EMU.

I consider the ETUC a valuable partner for the implementation of the Social Investment Package. I look forward to your involvement along with your members. Further, I – and with me Commissioner Andor – very much hope that you can attend the Annual Convention on the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion on 26-27 November 2013. This will be a key occasion for dialogue between policy makers, key stakeholders and citizens, and will help outline plans to advance reform in the Member States to confront poverty and social exclusion in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Whether during the Convention or on another moment, I look forward to a continuous discussion on the way forward for the European social models.

Yours sincerely,



*Dr Lieve Franssen
Director*