



Social Platform Reaction

Election of Ursula von der Leyen as President of the European Commission

Today Social Platform urges newly elected President von der Leyen to have an ambitious commitment to Social Europe. At a time when there is a clear need to strengthen the policies that underpin the social fabric of Europe, we welcome some of the policy initiatives in her political guidelines and look forward to supporting their delivery in the coming 5 years but we must ensure no one is left behind.

At a time when 1 in 5 in Europe are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, including 1 in 4 children, Social Platform notes the commitment to a new action plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Progress towards the Porto targets has stalled in recent years, and there cannot be a new action plan without an evaluation and full implementation of the current one. Social Platform, and its members, look forward to partnering with the European Commission in ensuring we achieve our social targets.

In particular, President von der Leyen can rely on Social Platform in the development and delivery of the first ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, to lift at least 15 million people out of poverty by 2030, and work towards the wider eradication of poverty and fulfil the Sustainable Development Goal target of reducing poverty by at least 50% by 2030.

The inclusion of social protections and essential public services, including social, health and care services will be crucial to achieving Social Europe. Social Platform will continue to advocate for adequate social protection systems, including through Minimum Income, and better and stronger social services to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Going beyond incomes, we welcome the emphasis on addressing costs which continue to burden households, including energy and housing costs. The nomination of a European Commissioner responsible for Housing to deliver a European Affordable Housing Plan, and a pan-European Investment Platform for Affordable and Sustainable Housing is a positive development, however the European Commission must ensure that such initiatives also deliver for marginalised and vulnerable groups, and ensure that tackling homelessness is part of this strategy.

The commitment to increasing funding for the Just Transition is a welcome development, along with maintaining the Green Deal targets. We cannot achieve our social targets, nor green targets, without a Just Transition. There is a real risk that climate and environmental policies can worsen inequalities and poverty. Social Platform will continue to advocate for a stronger Social Climate Fund and a Commissioner responsible for the Just Transition to prevent anyone being left behind.

Social Platform welcomes President von der Leyen's commitment to revise the Public Procurement Directive. This revision is a welcome opportunity to enshrine social clauses to ensure that publicly funded contracts are not awarded to companies that lower employment conditions or health and safety standards and to tackle the downward spiral of public procurement.

Re-appointing a Commissioner for Equality will support the delivery of an updated strategy on LGBTIQ+ equality, developing a new anti-racism strategy and a follow-up gender equality strategy. While the Political Guidelines reference the need to protect minority groups, Social Platform is disappointed that there is no commitment to the EU Roma Strategic Framework nor to next steps for the Strategy for Persons with Disabilities. We will fight to ensure the European Commission brings forth concrete policy proposals to fight discrimination and exclusion throughout the Union.

Additionally, Social Platform is concerned about the rhetoric of migration as a security threat, which ignores the human rights and dignity of migrants who must be allowed move and settle in safety. Human rights based rules for migration is essential to allow our societies to grow and thrive.

Social Platform welcomes the broad references for the European Commission to step up engagement with civil society organisations. However, at a time when civil society is under increasing attacks, we believe this commitment must be underpinned by both an EU Strategy for Civil Society and an inter-institutional agreement on Civil Dialogue.

Social Platform is disappointed that the political guidelines do not provide commitments towards the Social Economy nor the European Care Strategy. A thriving Social Economy is crucial to achieve both social and green targets, while the further implementation of the Care Strategy is key to strengthen much needed care and social services.

We welcome the commitment to making the next European Commission an "Investment Commission". This is key considering growing social and green investment needs. However, the political guidelines mainly focus on activating private investment. While important, a stronger focus on strengthening public investment is needed, including through a strengthened multiannual financial framework with a stronger focus on and earmarking for social priorities, cohesion funding, a just transformation fund post-2026 to finance a truly just transition and pursuing different avenues for more progressive taxation.

Europe has many challenges to face in the coming years. In recent years there has been a shrinking space for social civil society, and we cannot allow the growing emphasis on security, defence, competitiveness or industry, to come at the cost of our social rights. However, today's political guidelines provide a framework to improve the quality of life and living and working conditions of people across Europe. Social Platform, and its members, are ready to work with President von der Leyen in achieving a stronger and more social Europe and look forward to meeting early in the mandate.