

Turin Forum on Social Rights in Europe

Turin, 18 March 2016

Transcription of the intervention of Mr Rudi Delarue – DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Mobility, European Commission

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Ladies and Gentlemen, Chair, Ministers, thank you very much for giving the European Commission the opportunity to briefly present the new initiative, a forward looking initiative, on the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The President of the European Commission for the moment, Mr Juncker, is in the European Council and also the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, was not able to come to Turin because of obligations, but the European Commission is really grateful that we have this opportunity.

I would like to thank the Council of Europe and we appreciate also the cooperation with the Council of Europe.

First of all, I would refer to what President Juncker has said to the European Parliament in his statement on the State of the Union, that the European Commission will present a Pillar of Social Rights and the objective is to strengthen the social dimension of the European Union and in particular the Eurozone. However, the initiative will be open to other interested EU member States.

We need, as indicated by the President, to take into account a change in the realities of European societies and the world of work. We have to address also the increasing divergences within European countries, especially the Eurozone, and between the members of the Eurozone. So, this Pillar will be like a compass, a social compass, for renewed convergence within the euro area and for governance.

It is important to note that the pillar should complement what we have already jointly achieved when it comes to social rights. We will, of course, include the international legal instruments on social rights.

The Commission adopted last week the process of consultation by a Communication which is available. It is a short document but it is accompanied by a number of annexes, including, a preliminary outline of the Pillar. We have also background documents on key economic, employment and social challenges, and you will note also that in chapter 5 of the background document there is very explicit reference to the Revised European Social Charter and ILO conventions. There are technical background documents on 20 domains covered by the draft Pillar, with international social rights references.

The main aims of the consultation – (and to make it very clear, the Council of Europe will be directly consulted and involved; and it is of course also an open consultation. There are two elements: we have varied consultations and broader ones), there are three aims: to research the EU social “acquis”, reflect on new trends in work patterns and societies, and gather feedback on the preliminary outline of the Pillar. The consultation will last until 2016.

I will also very briefly inform you that there is cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe on the European Social Charter. This has been addressed by the Commissioner for Employment last year, and there has been a bit between the Vice President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans and Mr Jagland, and they agreed to establish focal points for cooperation.

We take this very seriously and we are also looking forward to the cooperation with the Council of Europe on this important initiative, it is a forward thinking initiative. I would like to underline that the Commission at the same time adopted a new proposal on posting of workers in order to better address the problem of equal pay.

So we are looking to the future. Thank you very much.