



THE EESC AND THE QUALITY OF WORK

During the July Plenary Session of the EESC (European Economic and Social Committee), a highly topical debate took place on improving worker protection through quality jobs, culminating in the adoption of the Opinion SOC/856 on the subject. Against a backdrop of environmental, digital, demographic and geo-economic transitions, the quality of work is an essential component of the resilience of the European economic and social model. In this regard, whilst acknowledging the difficulty of establishing a common definition of the concept of quality employment, given the varying sectoral, regional and social contexts, the Committee calls for the promotion of a common approach to the quality of work, based on publications by the OECD, the ILO and Eurofound, with shared indicators that could cover pay, health and safety, training and skills, the quality of working hours, social dialogue and worker representation. It is also emphasised that the creation of quality jobs requires an environment conducive to investment and innovation, particularly for SMEs and the social economy, in



the belief that geopolitical and economic changes, as well as technological, green and demographic transitions, affect businesses, the labour market and workers, creating a very strong link between the quality of work and competitiveness. According to Councillor Ulgiati «social dialogue and collective bargaining are fundamental, as they enable responses to be tailored to national and sectoral contexts, supporting the transformations currently underway and safeguarding the quality of work. Furthermore, health and safety at work are also an essential component of the quality of work - he concluded - representing an investment in sustainable productivity, in the quality of work organisation, and in the sustainability of career paths».

EU: THE REVITALISATION OF THE SOCIAL PILLAR

Almost ten years after its proclamation in 2017 and five years after the Porto Summit, the European Commission adopted, a few days ago, a new "Communication on the European Pillar of Social Rights". The document takes stock of the progress made and identifies three strategic and urgent priorities to guide the Union's policies in the face of technological, demographic and economic transitions. Although employment figures across the EU show a positive trend – standing at 76.1 per cent in 2025, not far from the 78 per cent target set for 2030 – the EU still lags significantly behind in tackling poverty and in adult learning (39.5 per cent compared to the 60 per cent target). Precisely to accelerate progress towards these goals and respond to new global challenges, on the 22nd of July the European Commission presented a new initiative identifying three urgent key areas that complement existing programmes on employment, skills, mobility and poverty reduction: 1) affordability and the cost of living; 2) the use of artificial intelligence for the future of work; 3) reducing inequalities and expanding equal opportunities. On the issue of affordability, the Commission has recognised that many

households continue to face "high costs for housing, energy, services and essential goods" and that it will therefore continue to support measures that reduce the risk of poverty. On the subject of the development and adoption of AI, the Berlaymont Building has noted that new technologies are raising "important and critical questions about the future of work" and that it is therefore necessary to prepare for profound changes, ensuring that citizens, workers and businesses can fully benefit from the potential of Artificial Intelligence. Finally, with regard to the chapter on reducing inequalities that undermine social and territorial cohesion, thereby weakening the EU's innovation and competitiveness, continuous and sustained efforts are required to mitigate them. The European Pillar of Social Rights therefore represents "the compass for building a stronger social Europe that protects, empowers and supports European citizens", as President Ursula von der Leyen stated, thereby reaffirming the commitment to placing social issues at the heart of EU policies.

