



ETUC Resolution for an effective EU anti-poverty strategy

Adopted at the Executive Committee meeting of 19 & 20 November 2025

The ETUC has been advocating for a strong [EU anti-poverty strategy since 2019](#), as a comprehensive framework for coherent and ambitious initiatives to eradicate poverty and to guarantee a fair social market economy. The EU's renewed social contract must be rooted in peace, social justice, and the dignity of work.

In order to meet the ambitions for the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS), the ETUC calls for the coherent and effective implementation of already identified and new measures, as well as for the necessary resource allocation for quality jobs, social progress and against poverty in the next MFF.

It is time for concrete steps to guarantee the full respect of human and social rights and erase poverty – as specified by the [ETUC in the dedicated social partners' hearing and online call for inputs](#).

Thus the ETUC urgently calls for the APS to encompass:

- **An effective commitment accompanied by strong initiatives to end in-work poverty**, by ensuring wage increases, higher statutory minimum wages and stronger collective bargaining. The ETUC also calls for more effective enforcement to tackle unpaid work, as well as for EU action to address extreme exploitation and precarious and insecure work;
- **An ambitious Quality Jobs Roadmap and Act** delivering the necessary legislative initiatives and investments for quality jobs in every region and in every sector, [enhanced by a renewed industrial policy](#) to support growth and upward socio-economic convergence. Legislative measures must be adopted, improving working conditions and quality jobs in every sector and every region (ANNEX), in order to ensure that no one, in any life-stage, remains vulnerable despite being in work (ANNEX), and guarantee fair, effective, solidarity-based social protection through adequate benefits when needed;
- **The full implementation of the EPSR**. The ETUC calls for the ambitious and holistic implementation of the three EPSR chapters, making each right effective for everyone **in a life-cycle approach**, including through **strong minimum floors of effective rights and measures to ensure improvement of living and working conditions**. The ETUC calls for the necessary resources in the future MFF. (See [ETUC](#), [ETUC 2020](#) and [2025 ETUC input for the new Action Plan to continue implementing the EPSR](#));
- **Strong measures addressing inequality as a key condition to combat and prevent poverty**. Millions of people marginally above the poverty threshold are still excluded from quality education and equal opportunities, including for their children, which perpetuates social segregation and intergenerational poverty (see ANNEX). [Redistributive tools](#) such as [progressive taxation](#) and [universal and public social protection](#), would allow more of society to deliver and share in inclusive growth, resulting in social cohesion as well as competitiveness. The EU's Social Model is also **key for the EU's economic success**;



- The central role of social partners in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of policies and investments concerning poverty eradication with effective participatory mechanisms;
- Tailored measures to address socio-economic vulnerabilities, within integrated inclusion plans coordinating active employment and social policies (see TU findings in ANNEX). Priorities must focus on children, young people, persons with disabilities (see ANNEX), people with chronic illnesses (e.g. HIV, cancer etc.), people with a migrant background, and those facing any kind of (intersectional) discrimination. The ETUC demands systematic analysis of poverty due to lack of access to employment for these groups, and the evaluation of legislative and policy effectiveness in preventing poverty at EU and national level. Fiscal resources must be available to reverse current trends. Women, not a “mere group” but half of the EU population, face persistent disadvantages requiring long-known policy interventions that require an ambitious new Gender Equality Strategy post 2025;
- Enabling, high-quality, universal public services and welfare states. Public welfare and services reduce inequalities and the impact of poverty. Fiscal strategies must allow MS to guarantee these economic and social stabilisers, and the EU must provide effective funding for territories facing structural disadvantage. The ETUC demands to embed the recommendations of the [High-level Group on the Future of Social Protection and of the Welfare State in the EU](#) into EU and national policies, monitor their impact on poverty targets, and ensure financial resources to national public and social services via the EU Semester;
- Adequate **minimum income provisions** for all guaranteed by a directive (ANNEX). The right to live in dignity and inclusion requires universal access to adequate essential services: housing, income keeping pace with the cost of living including after retirement, health and long-term care. Indicators to assess and address people’s needs must be updated to take into account [access to essential services](#), housing (ETUC replies to public consultations), social assistance and services, given their [impact on minimum floors effectiveness](#), especially for [older people](#) or those facing vulnerabilities;
- Policy interventions and fiscal resources to invest in people. Both EU and national budgets must support training, labour-market integration, job retention, active ageing, intergenerational solidarity, public employment services and career transitions. The ETUC will continue advocating for European Economic Governance and the Semester to align with APS goals. The systematic use of the distributional impact assessment for all policy recommendations must be adopted. The Social Scoreboard and Social Convergence Framework (see [2025 ETUC inputs](#)) must be updated: introduce job-quality indicators based on the ETUC definition of quality jobs; [update poverty line](#) methodology to incorporate inflation and housing costs; adopt methodologies in the new EPSR Action Plan to assess interlinked progress in labour-market inclusion, job quality and effective, adequate social protection – particularly pensions – following models such as [ETUC SociAll 2024](#).

The EU APS must inform the policy and legislative frameworks and direct them coherently with the achievement of the targets as soon as possible.



Annex I

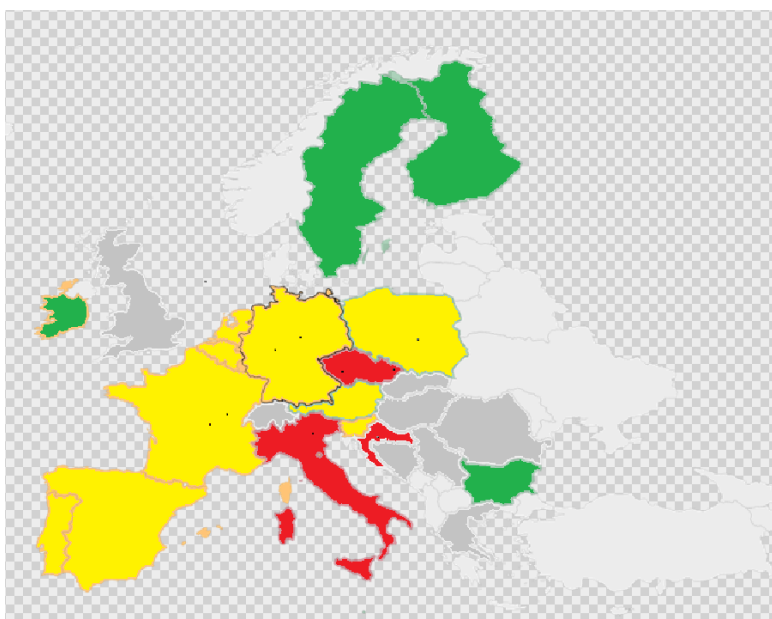
ETUC Analysis of Member States' Actions to Support Labour Market Inclusion and Supporting/Enabling Welfare

Correctly framing the context of the upcoming EU anti-poverty strategy represents a main concern to target the finally effective measures to achieve the ambitious targets proposed by President von der Leyen.

The ETUC has expressed its extensive views on the upcoming strategy during the hearing dedicated to Social Partners organised online by the EC in mid-October 2025. The ETUC delegates in the hearing mostly agree with the preliminary assessment made by the EC about the roots of poverty: among other features, it is of paramount importance to ensure that work protects people from poverty in any case, while efficient welfare provisions must provide an adequate and effective safety net for those who cannot work. The EC correctly underlines how unemployment, precariousness and poor job quality are the main causes of poverty, which affects low work intensity households – among other groups. The ETUC has often remarked that work should not only prevent poverty but allow workers and their families to thrive and expect a better future and social inclusion.

In 2024 and 2025 the ETUC promoted a series of surveys across the EU asking its affiliates to provide their structured views on: the level of satisfaction in the implementation of the Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed; the ETUC consultation on the Social Convergence Framework (April 2025); Member States' actions to support underrepresented people in the labour market. The surveys provided evidence of the ETUC's collective view on welfare–activation systems across the EU, identifying good practices, challenges, and recommendations.

In 2024-2025 the SPPC members have been engaged in particular in an action in the framework of the ETUC SociAll project, aimed at **assessing the level of trade union satisfaction with national implementation of minimum income schemes**. The results of the survey, revised within the group of respondents, have produced the following overview:





The map shows the overall picture of the EU situation from the trade union perspective: in RED situations where a MIS is not present: Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy; in YELLOW situations where a MIS is in place but is NOT SATISFACTORY: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, The Netherlands, Luxembourg; in GREEN situations where a MIS is in place and is SATISFACTORY: Bulgaria, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden.

	MIS to prevent from poverty and social exclusion Present/not present	Adequacy Y/N	Effectiveness Y/N	Coverage Y/N	Take-up rate H/L	Overall satisfactory/ Overall non-satisfactory
AUSTRIA	Present	Adequate	Ineffective	Universal	High take-up rate	Not satisfactory
BELGIUM	Present	Not adequate	Ineffective	Universal	Low take-up rate	Not satisfactory
BULGARIA	Present	Adequate	Effective	Universal	High take-up rate	Overall satisfactory
CROATIA	Not present					
CZECH REPUBLIC	Not present					
FINLAND	Present	Adequate	Effective	Universal	Low take-up rate	Overall satisfactory
FRANCE	Present	Not adequate	Effective	Low coverage and inclusiveness	Low take-up rate	Not satisfactory
GERMANY	Present	Not adequate	Effective	Low coverage and inclusiveness	High take-up rate	Not satisfactory
IRELAND	Present	Not adequate	Effective	Universal	High take-up rate	Overall satisfactory
ITALY	Not present					
LUXEMBOURG	Present	Not adequate	Ineffective	Low coverage and inclusiveness	High take-up rate	Not satisfactory
MALTA	Present	Adequate	Effective	Universal	Low take-up rate	Overall satisfactory
POLAND	Present	Adequate	Ineffective	Low coverage and inclusiveness	Low take-up rate	Not satisfactory
PORTUGAL	Present	Not adequate	Effective	Low coverage and inclusiveness	Low take-up rate	Not satisfactory
SAN MARINO	Present	Not adequate	Ineffective	Low coverage and inclusiveness	Low take-up rate	Not satisfactory
SLOVENIA	Present	Not adequate	Effective	Universal	High take-up rate	Not satisfactory
SPAIN	Present	Not adequate	Ineffective	Universal	Low take-up rate	Not satisfactory
SWEDEN	Present	Adequate	Effective	Universal	High take-up rate	Overall satisfactory
THE NETHERLANDS	Present	Not adequate	Ineffective	Universal	High take-up rate	Not satisfactory

The table immediately above displays the more detailed TU assessment of MIS by country, based on the compliance of systems with the principles adopted in the 2020 ETUC resolution on MIS.

A second survey took place in Spring 2025, in the context of the EMCO-PAG, when the Social Protection Committee asked Member States representatives to express their evaluation of **national measures undertaken in a series of areas**. This exercise served to frame the SPC yearly thematic report.

At the time, the ETUC expressed its regret that social partners were excluded from such evaluation – as if they were not an active part of those very activation measures, their design and especially their successful implementation. Therefore the survey was autonomously conducted by the ETUC via the SPPC members. Each trade union organisation was kindly required to provide a response to the same questions and sub-questions as governmental representatives, with regard to the state of implementation/effectiveness/satisfaction with respect to national initiatives undertaken.

The replies to the questionnaire revealed a mostly low level of implementation/effectiveness/satisfaction of measures undertaken so far, covering only on an ad hoc basis or not fully integrated into the overall policy framework; significant room for improvement. In particular, there emerged a low adequacy and coverage of minimum income schemes (MIS), weak links between social protection and activation, and persistent poverty risks among vulnerable groups, whereas activation policies should be embedded in enabling welfare systems grounded in adequacy, accessibility, and the right to quality work.



The results of both surveys prove significant for the purposes of the EU APS, as they call for the adoption of a holistic and effective approach, based on:

- a comprehensive revision of welfare–activation systems in Europe, aligned with the EPSR and the poverty reduction targets;
- the redesign of MIS as universal and subjective rights;
- the full interoperability between national and regional systems;
- the need for dynamic adjustment mechanisms indexing MIS to cost-of-living;
- the revision of contribution thresholds to include all workers (even informal ones) in the legal provision of adequate social protection benefits and entitlements of any kind;
- massive investment in supportive services like childcare, transport, and digital access.

In general, trade unions acknowledge modest progress in aligning national systems with EU social objectives but warn that **fragmented and underfunded activation strategies risk deepening inequality**. The ETUC calls for a renewed EU-level commitment to adequate minimum income, quality employment, and universal access to welfare. True activation requires empowering welfare, ensuring people have the security and services they need to participate in the labour market with dignity. In particular:

- An effective European anti-poverty strategy for Europe must place **quality employment at its core**. Without embedding quality in employment, efforts to reduce poverty risk remaining superficial - many could still be trapped in precarious or low-paying work. For the ETUC, “quality jobs” means good wages, work security via standard employment and access to social protection, lifelong learning opportunities, good working conditions in safe and healthy workplaces, reasonable working time with good work-life balance, and trade union representation and bargaining rights. A job lacking one or more of these dimensions may leave people vulnerable to poverty despite being “in work”;
- The Quality Jobs Package must include **legislative initiatives** such as a Directive on Just Transition (anticipation of change, training during working hours), regulation of labour intermediaries with joint liability, a Directive addressing psychosocial risks and online harassment, an AI in the workplace Directive enforcing the “human in control” principle, a Telework / Right to Disconnect Directive, reinforcement of collective bargaining and workplace democracy standards, public procurement rules conditioned on respect for workers’ rights, and bans on zero-hours contracts and unpaid internships. On the investment side, ETUC calls for an EU Investment Facility for quality jobs and just transitions, stronger social conditionalities on public funding, and the revival of EU fiscal capacity to support Member States.
- Combating poverty requires **robust and well-resourced public employment services** to ensure fair access to labour market opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups. Strong PES are essential to implement active labour market policies, provide tailored support for vulnerable groups, and accompany workers through career transitions. As the ETUC has underlined, reinforcing PES means restoring the capacity lost after the 2008 crisis, guaranteeing adequate funding, and ensuring the involvement of trade unions in decision-making. By strengthening PES, Europe can provide workers with real safety nets and pathways to quality jobs, making anti-poverty strategies more effective and sustainable.



- **Ensuring the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market** must be a cornerstone of the upcoming EU Anti-Poverty Strategy. ETUC stresses that quality employment for workers with disabilities cannot rely on voluntary or goodwill-based measures but requires binding rights, proper funding of Public Employment Services, and the active role of trade unions through collective bargaining and social dialogue to provide for the right to reasonable accommodation and retention strategies. Equal pay in sheltered workshops according to the collective agreement applying to the sector activity, and strong occupational health and safety legislation are essential to prevent exclusion, poverty, and discrimination in the workplace. At the same time, the EU must guarantee mobility and equal access to social rights for persons with disabilities across Member States. This includes strengthening the European Disability Card to ensure portability of benefits. Also, it is important to guarantee that worker with disabilities do not lose their financial entitlements when accessing employment, as these are meant to contribute to the extra costs associated with their functionality. Reliable data, clear employment targets, and stronger enforcement mechanisms are necessary to monitor progress.