

Key Messages - Our Demands

For a dignified life free of poverty

Securing adequate levels of income throughout the life-cycle

1. Ensure decent adequate income throughout the life-cycle

What? Income is generally comprised of resources from wages and/or income support, and should ensure that at every stage, from childhood to old age, every woman, man, girl and boy in Europe, regardless of their age, ethnic / migration background, have sufficient financial resources to live a life in dignity. This right represents a life-line for those experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and should guarantee an adequate wage, social protection and a safety net for those who cannot work or access quality jobs to prevent an escalation into poverty at different stages of the life-cycle.

How? We call for the EU to defend a comprehensive and universal decent work framework and social protection system from a life cycle perspective that should include: A European Directive on adequate (Minimum) Income, a Framework ensuring decent and adequate wages, European Directive on adequate (Minimum) Pension and Universal Children's Allowance.

2. Move beyond the patchwork of social security and protection rights

What? More and more women and men in Europe and in particular, young women and men are facing high levels of unemployment and/or continuous precarious working conditions, notably in terms of work contracts: fixed term, zero-hours, mini jobs, etc, resulting in poor quality jobs. This in turn is a barrier to accumulating social security rights. These rights become more 'liquid' with detrimental effects in particular for those who cannot access the labour market, such as men and especially women with ethnic/migration background. Increasing conditionality of social security and protection rights (unemployment and minimum income benefit for example) result in greater risks of falling into poverty traps. Social security and protection rights that are based on civil status (married, cohabiting, etc) are discriminatory as they have a differential impact on men and especially women throughout their life-cycle.

How? Ensure that all jobs are of quality, and guarantee access to social security and protection rights, throughout the life-cycle. Ensure that periods spent outside of formal work: for caring reasons, maternity leave, life-long learning, illness, disability, participation in other areas of life, unemployment are assimilated as credits to avoid sanctions in the later part of the life-cycle particularly with regards to pensions. Ensure that social rights are individual rights. Develop a European Social Security and Protection Strategy, similar to the European Employment Strategy (years 2012-2020). Ensure that European labour mobility is a fair mobility where social protection standards, principles of 'decent work' and 'equal pay for equal work and work of equal value' are respected.

3. For a life-cycle integrated European Strategy on Poverty - Post Europe 2020 Mid Term Review

What? The headline target to lift at least 20 million women and men out of poverty by 2020 has failed as the increase in levels of poverty has risen by over 8 million since 2008. If the headline target is to be adequately addressed and met by 2020, decisive, integrated action is urgently required. It is clear that work alone is not a guaranteed route out of poverty, yet the 2020 Strategy overemphasises the need for greater labour-market participation, without adequate safeguards to ensure access to social rights. The review of Europe 2020 will clearly demonstrate that Europe is failing with regards to the poverty/social exclusion target.

How? An integrated rights-based European-wide Strategy to address poverty, that invests in decent jobs, quality social protection and services taking into account, how gender, age, ethnic/migration background shape access to resources and impact on poverty/social exclusion.

