

# EESC Conference, 7 July 2016: Next steps for a sustainable European future - Reforming Europe, implementing SDGs

## People: Social Justice and Decent Work

### - Workshop Messages *Fighting poverty and inequality and ensuring decent work*

#### 1) Change of paradigm – another growth model is needed!

Achieving the SDGs in the social area – poverty, inequality decent work – are central but won't be achieved without a shift towards a more inclusive model of development. Who benefits from growth? This needs to promote inclusive (and sustainable) growth, which creates jobs, reduces inequalities, supports inclusion and doesn't prejudice the environment.

#### 2) Decent work depends on job-rich growth, enforcing employment standards and positive active inclusion

There are opportunities and threats of new employment e.g. circular economy and carbon, but EU **concern should be most on how to ensure decent work...** which partly depends on 1) what type of economic growth: inclusive job-rich growth and fair distribution i.e. closing the gaps on income level, but also 2) employment standards: minimum wage and collective bargaining and 3) positive support into jobs through effective skills support and positive active inclusion. High-wage economies also support environmental standards.

#### 3) New employment trends mean adequate Social Protection is even more necessary combined with social investment

Social protection is being drastically cut through austerity policy response to the crisis, but the reality of new precarious work implies the need to increase the quality and effectiveness of welfare systems across the life course. Primary concern should be **social standards: adequate minimum income**, for those without other support, as part of a comprehensive universal social protection floor. This will need major social investment – public investment in income support but also to ensure access to essential services – education, housing, social services etc.

#### 4) How to ensure policy coherence?

How will the SDG goals in the social field link to existing strategies? SDGs must build on Europe 2020 poverty and employment and other social targets and the new Social Pillar of Rights. More importantly how to guarantee that macroeconomic goals deliver on social (and environmental!) goals? E.g. dominance of stability, fiscal consolidation and restructuring goals that are generating more poverty, including in-work poverty. It is particularly important to rebalance the European Semester, to ensure delivery on the targets and prevent negative impacts.

#### 5) No one left behind!

This means making sure the policies reach all the groups (e.g. women in prisons, most excluded), but also participation – who is at the table? How to involve civil society organizations in design, monitoring and delivery but also the people themselves. This is part of a broader question - how to regain trust of EU citizens? It is partly about more democratic and participative process, but also about goals – will the SDGs benefit people (and planet) or markets?