

## German EU Council Presidency Conference “Our Social Europe”, 16 September 2020

### Workshop 2 “Adequate, accessible and enabling minimum income schemes – The time for action is now!”

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#### Written summary submitted to panellists

##### **What?**

EU Institutions should agree a binding EU Framework Directive on rights-based, adequate, accessible & enabling minimum income, respecting national systems.

##### **Why?**

Almost 22% of people live AROPE in Europe. Due to COVID-19, we can expect millions more people to fall into poverty. Soft mechanisms have proved insufficient to provide incomes at an adequate level to respect the rights and dignity of those who need it.

##### **How?**

MS should agree on strong Council Conclusions calling on the EC to propose a Directive, which should be supported by EU funds to support national level implementation.

#### Transcript of oral intervention

##### **Ministers, Commissioner, Colleagues**

The European Anti-Poverty Network, Eurodiaconia, Caritas and the Social Platform organised a workshop this morning to discuss ‘Adequate, accessible and enabling MI schemes. The workshop brought together civil society, TUs, national governments, EU Institutions, academics, and people experiencing poverty. I’ll share some key messages and recommendations from the workshop.

We heard about how the Government of Latvia is revising its minimum income scheme to ensure it meets people basic needs, so that everyone can live a life of dignity. We heard about the revised Spanish scheme, which will directly increase the income of 2.3 million people.

In a poll during the workshop, 86% of participants recognised that a Framework Directive for Minimum Income is important, and 74% feel that it should be the main EU level instrument to make progress here.

As such, our main recommendation is that EU Institutions should agree a binding EU Framework Directive on rights-based, adequate, accessible & enabling minimum income, respecting national systems, competencies, and circumstances, and following an active inclusion approach.

This is because almost 22% of people live AROPE in Europe – almost 110 million people (about 1.5 times the population of Germany). We can expect millions more to be dragged into poverty because of the COVID19 pandemic.

Soft mechanisms have proved insufficient to provide adequate incomes to people living AROPE. A Framework Directive would guarantee everyone's right to an adequate minimum income and enable their full, dignified participation in society.

So, MS should agree strong Council Conclusions, calling on the Commission to propose a Directive, backed up by EU funds to support national level implementation, i.e. mainly the ESF+, and supportive conditions of the Stability and Growth Pact.

Commissioner, Ministers – now is the time to take decisive action, to propose a binding EU Framework Directive to guarantee adequate, accessible, and enabling minimum income, turning Principle 14 of the of Social Pillar into reality. This would provide a firm foundation for reducing inequality and poverty, in line with the SDGs. The money would reach the most vulnerable and become a direct transfer of resources through consumption in local services and shops. This is not just an instrument of Social Justice, but also of economic intelligence – it would support both social and economic upwards convergence throughout Europe.