

Ms Roxana Mînzatu
Executive Vice-President-designate for
People, Skills and Preparedness
European Commission

October 11th, 2024

Ms Teresa Ribera
Executive Vice-President-designate for
Clean, Just and Competitive Transition
European Commission

Mr Stéphane Séjourné
Executive Vice-President-designate for
Prosperity and Industrial Strategy
European Commission

CC : Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission

Esteemed Executive Vice-Presidents-designate of the European Commission,

We are writing to you as Member States of the European Union that are following the social economy agenda very closely to express our keen interest in seeing the European Union continue to work actively in this area during this new legislative cycle.

As you know, this sector encompasses some 4.3 million entities across the EU, employing more than 14 million workers and representing 8% of total EU GDP.

Furthermore, social economy is an important pillar within the social cohesion and economic democracy overall objective and in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as employment, education and skills development are relevant elements leading to creating quality jobs and promoting transformation of our industries and societies and the completion of the Single Market.

In this context, we find it concerning that none of the mission letters sent to the Commissioners-designate refer to responsibilities and competences in the sphere of the social economy. We deem essential for the new Commission to work effectively on the social economy dimension, including through ensuring a close cooperation among you, as Executive Vice-Presidents being in charge of the EU agenda in areas with a direct and substantial link with the social economy agenda.

As the mission letter of the Executive Vice-President-designate for People, Skills and Preparedness underlines, “Europe’s way of life is defined by the protections and opportunities of our social market economy” and we trust that the necessary coordination effort will be pursued in this regard, leading to better fulfilling the mission of supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model.

We are also in contact with the different political groups of the European Parliament regarding the renewal of the Social Economy Intergroup, which we hope will be achieved in the very near future. As you know, this Intergroup has existed since 1990 and in the previous term of the European Parliament comprised 73 MEPs from six different political groups.

The 2019-2024 term of the European Parliament was especially productive as regards the social economy, with the approval, among other initiatives, of the European Commission's Social Economy Action Plan in December 2021 and of the Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions in November 2023.

Following the momentum provided by the Ministerial Conference held in Paris on 17 February 2022, the San Sebastián Manifesto, signed on 14 November 2023, and the Liège Roadmap for Social Economy in the European Union, adopted on 12 February 2024, defined a clear path for the future of the sector in Europe. In particular, through the Liège Roadmap, no less than 20 Member States invited the Commission to "appoint one of the European Commissioners with full responsibility (inter alia) for the social economy" and to "continue and strengthen the Commission's implementation by 2030 of the Social Economy Action Plan".

For our countries, it is especially important that the new European Commission make a clear and firm commitment to the full implementation and a renewal of the Action Plan and of the Recommendation. It is also important to us that the new European Commission propose policy priorities in this field for the next EU legislature to address the important and pressing issues still facing the social economy.

Specifically, together with the mainstreaming of the social economy in the different sector-specific policies developed by the EU, we must continue to progress towards the creation of national and EU legal frameworks that support the sector. Such legal frameworks must seek to promote access to existing EU financing according to the needs, circumstances and added value of social economy entities, make use of existing EU structural and cohesion funds, and bear in mind the specificities of the social economy in EU public procurement processes as well as state aid rules.

We are at the disposal of the new Commission to ensure that the European Union and its Member States continue to lead the global agenda on the social economy. In recent years, such leadership has helped pave the way for the approval of the International Labour Organization Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy; the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Recommendation on the Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation; and the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development, the first General Assembly resolution on this matter.

Hoping that these considerations will be taken into account, we send you our warmest regards and wish you every success in your future responsibilities.

Yves Coppieters

Walloon Minister of Health, Environment, Solidarity and Social Economy (on behalf of Belgium)

Robert Habeck

Federal Vice Chancellor and Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of Germany

Georges Mischo

Minister of Labour of Luxembourg

Luka Mesec

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities of Slovenia

Yolanda Díaz Pérez

Second Vice-President and Minister of Labour and Social Economy of Spain