

FOREWORD BY DAN KERSCH

A decade following the beginning of the great recession the European Union might have left its day-to-day crisis management mode, nonetheless we are still confronted with serious social challenges in terms of unemployment and social exclusion. The proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights provides us with an important framework to guide actions at national and European level to address these challenges.

Ensuring that we put Europe back on track of social upwards convergence is essential in order to (re)gain citizen's trust in the European project. A lot has already been achieved, for example regarding the fight against youth unemployment through the European-wide youth guarantee, but as ministers of labour and social affairs, we have to further strengthen our efforts to combat unemployment and social exclusion.

The world of work is rapidly changing through digitalisation, new forms of work, and demographic change. We have to adapt the labour markets regulations and our social protection systems to this new reality with the aim of safeguarding citizen's wellbeing and fostering good jobs and good pay for all. Working people have suffered from stagnating wages and the rise of precarious forms of employment. Working poor – a term rarely associated with European labour markets in the past – has become a widespread phenome in some Member States of the Union.

We have to create a consensus to align economic and financial policy-making within the European Union and the Economic and Monetary Union with the social and employment objectives of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Only if we rebalance the European integration and pursue ambitious action at European and national level will we be able to ensure that growth improves the lives of the many, not the few.

The present report is the result of a seminar organised in June 2018. The challenges discussed then remain high on the agenda today. As minister of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy of the newly elected government of Luxembourg I will strive for a further strengthening of the social dimension of the European Union.

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