



SOLID Committee

Entrance Statements

Committee concerning Justice, citizenship, the instruments of solidarity and welfare among EU Member States

Synoptic Table

The following table is not meant as a complete synthesis of the Entrance Statements. Its aim is to simplify the recognition of the final decisions took by the different Parliamentary Groups during the online training.

Parliamentary Group	Issues to discuss	Proposed solutions
EPP	Unified European Civil Code	Creation of an ad-hoc committee about possibilities, risks, obstacles in order to realise a common ECC.
S&D	Unfair competition of workers within the EU.	Implement the paradigm "equal job, equal pay, equal rights" in order to reduce the actual 1:9 ratio of wages to 1:4
ECR	Workers rights among EU countries	A new regulation than can avoid competition among workers.
ALDE	Asylum Common European Policy* <i>*this issues would be better discussed in the PROXY Committee</i>	(a) European Rapid Emergency Force (b) Europ. Borders and Coasts Guard (c) Improve hotspots politics (d) Common European Asylum Procedure (e) European Blue Card (similar to US Green Card)
GUE/NGL	How to improve and standardise welfare protection in EU	(a) financial support to families with children (b) last resort income (minimum income) (c) a new serious pension policy for disadvantaged or elder people

Entrance Statements

EPP

Our Parliamentary Group decided that creation of the European Civil Code (ECC) is nowadays an extremely urgent and necessary issue. Due to the fact that this ECC can significantly increase harmonisation of private law within the European Union Member States, as well as, increase the level of solidarity among member states. Its aim is to integrate the Member States legally in one unified law field and provide a comprehensive manner of dealing with key areas of private law. The idea of creating a unified European Civil Code was born together with the creation of the European Union to unite not only the Member States into the European Union for economic reasons. However, also to unify its legal systems, thereby, the cooperation in various areas in the Member States would be performed in a clear and legally adequate way. Moreover, the citizens of the Member States will have unambiguous accessibility to the same laws and rights while conducting business or any other activity regarding legal matters within the EU.

However, the idea has arisen into a project that has got as many opponents as supporters. Objectively, one can think that since the EU was created to unify the Member States so it is natural that also laws should be unified. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the size of the undertaking of implementation and unification of the laws from each and one of the Member States into one ECC will be enormous. But at the same time legislation that is created by the EU is regularly implemented into the legal orders of all the Member States on a daily basis through regulations, directives, and other legal acts, so taking it into consideration it might sound reasonable and obvious to create ECC. Thus, bind the Member States stronger and more permanently.

From the political point of view, the creation of the ECC would bring an increasingly globalised economy and the picture of a united EU would emerge again with strong solidarity among member states. In comparison to the current situation and challenges that the EU is facing nowadays. That kind of progress in being united might be found as quite useful and desired by the EU as a whole.

Creation of the ECC would also bring a strong reduction of the significance of national borders since all the Member States would have the same laws and legal policies. It would be a milestone in the legal harmonisation of the EU Member States and facilitation for the EU citizens, especially while we take into consideration reasons of the development of welfare which might be found in the ECC. Moreover, it will decrease the cost regarding hiring someone that would know the way of performing legal actions and have knowledge of foreign law while performing transboundary transactions. With the adoption of the ECC, we will have a possibility to perfect the internal market into a single unit by removing all the differences and any possible further obstacles, and abolishing the internal fragmentation that can be leading to inefficiency. Thus, such steps will allow achieving great solidarity among the EU member states, because they will be all interested in the appropriate functioning of the new European Civil Code.

Thus, our proposal to the Parliament as a first step which must be adopted, it is a creation of ad hoc working groups. Their primary aim is to consolidate the EU's civil legislation and make a comprehensive report of main differences among member states of the EU. Because we have countries that have a civil legal system but we also have common law countries. Since exists a huge difference between common law and civil law, in a way of thinking about law, in general, we need to have a clear understanding of such issue. As a result, with necessary information of main differences, we will be able then to continue to develop the ECC.

S&D

The purpose of this document is to determine the position and engagement of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament towards a real Progressive European Social Policy, as the basis for a prosperous and sustainable Social Europe. This paper primarily focus on the issues related to the competences of poverty, inequality and unemployment in the European Union. Problems regarding the European Social Policy are closely related to the lack of an efficient Social Agenda in Europe and lack of the supports for generation of further social progress originated before the start of the economic and financial crisis. Poverty and social exclusion are inherent social problems in all EU countries affecting more than 120 million people. In Europe, there is considerable income disproportions and 17% are living below the poverty line. Due to the economic crisis, the sustainability of the social protection system is undermined and the gap of social inequality is widening each year. Nowadays, the EU is facing high unemployment rates that contributed to the deterioration of the social problems. With the purpose of eliminating such dangers a number of the far-reaching reforms were introduced. Target 2020 aims to improve the social situation caused by economic crisis in the EU, combat poverty and inequality, and guarantee sustainable and inclusive growth. Yet, today the EU countries are far from reaching the 2020 target strategy.

The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats are deeply concerned with the European Social Policy and call of the collective actions to combating poverty and creating mechanisms that will guarantee fair and reliable employment. The EU has developed social protection systems based on fundamental rules and common values in order to protect their working citizens from unexpected situations, such as disabilities, health problems, losing a close relative or parenting issues. Furthermore, the principle of solidarity has been adopted to benefit from the advantages and overcome the disadvantages of social, economic and political environments within Europe. The EU employed itself to foster solidarity and civil rights within the community in terms of working rights, regulating trade unions, new welfare strategies and a collective principle for social protection. EU agencies have been also collectively working on developing national strategies for member states to reduce the rate of poverty, encourage effective health and social care systems.

In order to reach the 2020 targets, political action is needed at the European and national levels to support the rights of the workers and guarantee a decent wage. We can no more tolerate what we could call “unfair competition” among workers coming from different Countries of the EU. The difference between wages is spreading a polarization of standards of living and is undermining the pursuit of a decent life for European citizens. The European Commission noted that “it is in each member’s common and self-interest to be able to cushion economic shocks well, to modernise economic structures and welfare systems, and make sure that citizens and businesses can adapt to, and benefit from, new demands, trends and challenge. It is equally in each member’s interest that all others do so at a similar speed”. The status quo is increasing the gap between workers and the austere policies are only making the situation to get worse. On the other hand private companies are taking advantage of this gap, leaving richest member states, creating a market distortion and assuring the same profits (or increasing them) at the expense of a stagnation of salaries. A more equitable social policy on wages is needed also to stimulate the growth of our economies. We must stand together and guarantee the same rights to all citizens. The paradigm we need to follow should be “equal job, equal pay, equal rights”. We cannot deal with the challenges of globalization if we cannot guarantee a decent standard of life, and therefore a decent wage, to each European worker. The Socialists and Democrats hereby propose an European minimum wage, achieved not with equality of earnings, but with a balanced purchasing power parity (PPP).

National minimum wages vary widely across EU member States. For instance, in Bulgaria this equals EUR 215, whereas in Luxembourg the minimum wage is almost 9 times higher at EUR 1.923. If including candidate countries Albania, the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Montenegro, and by converting all EU member’s currencies into Euros, it becomes possible to divide the countries where minimum wage is in place into three distinct groups. The first where minimum wages fail to reach EUR 500 formed by candidates Albania, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and members Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia and Poland. The second group where earnings vary from EUR 500 to EUR 1,000 is composed by Greece, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia and Malta. Finally, the third – where wages surpass EUR 1,000 consists of Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg and Ireland.

This simplistic comparison is somewhat unfair if not taking into consideration the actual cost of living in those countries. With EUR 5 in Bulgaria one can purchase more consumer goods as if the same EUR 5 were to be spent in Luxembourg. We therefore understand that by simply creating a wage line among EU states, one would be creating an unrealistic divide. With this in mind we, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, propose that an average line be drawn from the PPP of every state. This allows the 1:9 ratio of wages to be reduced to a 1:4 ratio in PPP terms. The idea here proposed is not to eradicate with the ratio disparities as this would destabilise the economies of most countries, especially with regards to inflation – but rather – to eliminate the first quarter of it creating three well-defined groups where the poorest can also offer basic living standards to their population. From the perspective that current minimum wages vary from 445PPP in Romania to 1,597PPP in Luxembourg, we propose a minimum wage line where 600PPP is adopted as the minimum standard. This would

benefit the following candidate and member states: Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovakia – thus creating a large group of lower, yet fairly-paid societies, followed by two groups or richer states.

We, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats understand the challenges implicated to this proposal as many of the said economies are very fragile. We therefore propose a gradual relaxation of taxes in those countries. The amount of taxes on Production and Imports would be calculated in direct perspective to the PPP of the said country and the tax reductions are to be re-established every year according to the PPP growth of every country until they reach the minimum proposed of 600PPP per full-time worker, per calendar month. This would stimulate investment in lower-ranked countries, generating jobs and growth to such societies. In the other hand this would help create stronger economies in the lowest sector of the European divide reducing the risks of economic collapses such as the one recently experienced by Greece. We, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats strongly believe that this could benefit the whole of the EU and welcome the distinct viewpoints of the various groups that comprise this parliament in order to turn this proposal into reality.

ECR

International protection of human rights is essential in crisis situations where states suspend basic freedoms and frequently commit massive violations of human rights treaties. In this perspective, the European Commission should look at all gross and reliably attested violations of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (not just patterns of such violations).

The EU needs a firm hand from the European Commission on world politics in order for all parties to be able to work together.

The European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR), as every parliamentary group designed to the building of the " European Home ", is behaving like a sister with her brother: take it slow! Otherwise, we might run the risk to be just blow smoke.

Current problem with solidarity, citizenship, justice and welfare among EU

On 8 March 2016, the European Commission proposed a review of the Posted Workers Directive, which regulates people employed in one member state, but are sent to temporarily work in another.

The EU Commission presented a statement to MEPs on revisions to 1996 Posted Workers Directive. It says that EU workers who are posted to another EU nation for up to two years should be entitled to minimum pay rates in the country where they are sent. Therefore, it avoids abuse, fraud and social dumping, the practise of undermining local market conditions by cheap labour.

Foremost, the revision of the 1996 EU law has sparked controversy in the past, as the 28-country bloc struggles to reconcile the freedom to offer cross-border services, a cornerstone of the internal market, with clear differences in wages and levels of social protection. An average hour of work costs an employer €40 in Denmark and €39 in

Belgium, but only €3.80 in Bulgaria, €4.60 in Romania and €8.40 in Poland, according to Eurostat data for 2014.

Besides, the European Conservatives and Reformists group employment spokesman Anthea McIntyre has argued that revisiting the Posting of Workers directive is a mistake that risks adding more uncertainty and red tape to businesses. "We talk about better regulation but then steam ahead with a revision of the Posting of Workers directive before we've even implemented the last law, which itself was meant to implement the law before that!" said Miss McIntyre.

To conclude, if this continues what could happen ?

Xenophobic rejection by workers from other countries. Consequently, the Directive could generate a risk at some point: the receiving countries could tighten regulation against these posted workers, spelling the end of the international market.

MAIN ECR PRIORITIES

The current Directives has been undermined by a series of court judgements, and a revision is absolutely necessary to re-establish the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work. This is the interests of all workers, especially posted workers and honest companies. Indeed, remuneration is necessary for the protection of workers.

For this reason, I am fully behind the ECR members whom believe in the common sense approach that would have been to wait for the latest update in the law to be implemented before rushing ahead with a new proposal.

ALDE

II.1 Which is the opinion your Parliamentary Group has on the possible new instruments of solidarity among EU member states and new welfare tools for EU?

There is enough political resistance at a national level within the EU Member states when it comes to accepting asylum seekers, refugees and displaced persons for humanitarian reasons. Alde calls on the EU to focus on its commitment for guaranteeing the principles of solidarity and responsibility-sharing and to stress the useful role that local and regional authorities can play in the creation of safe and legal migration ways into Europe, in the integration of migrants and in the prevention of irregular migration. The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe has for a long time advocated a common and central migration system which could replace the current Dublin system. Furthermore it attempts to implement the European Blue Card for legal migration

II.2 Within this topic, which is the most urgent issue you think is needed to be discussed?

Without a doubt, the most urgent issue within the topic of the common European asylum policy is the current refugee crisis. So far, the present asylum system that is based on Dublin Regulation that have not proved itself effective and put additional pressure on the member states with external borders. Under the conditions of asylum policies that do not work, uncontrolled influx of refugees may cause a severe damage to unity and solidarity within the European Union. Moreover, some states have already resorted to practices of closing their borders and adopting the policies that violate human rights and freedoms. Therefore, urgent actions should be taken in order to manage the refugee crisis in an effective way, save the Schengen zone, and give the necessary protection to

the people fleeing the conflict and seek for international protection. Hence, ALDE Parliamentary Group considers refugee crisis as the most urgent issue that that demands for immediate effective solution.

II.3 Which solution you propose and which kind of Proposal the Parliament should adopt on this issue?

ALDE Parliamentary Group insists on adoption of the following urgent measures that will help to manage the refugee crisis and will contribute to creation of the balanced and effective common European asylum policy.

Firstly, it is necessary to create a European Rapid Refugee Emergency Force (ERREF) based on the article 78.3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. These temporary measures will assist member states in management of the EU external borders and improve living conditions of refugees both in Turkey and in the EU.

Secondly, the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG) should be established on the basis of Frontex. To do that, the budget of the Agency should be multiplied by five (to 600 million). The states that do not support this measure should leave the Schengen, while Member States that have external borders but are not members of the Schengen, should be able to contribute and benefit from the EBCG.

Thirdly, it is important to upgrade hot spots to reception centres managed by the ERREF and later by the EBCG. Considering the fact that the hot spots do not function in practice due to the numerous influx of refugees, they should be elaborated and function as a transit zone until the status of the migrant is assessed. There, refugees should be fingerprinted, health-checked, security assessed, and assisted with the necessary paperwork.

Fourthly, it is crucial to replace the Dublin Regulation with a new single European Asylum Procedure. The new system should be based on a fair sharing of responsibility between Member States. According to the new system, the country of first arrival criteria should be removed from the Dublin regulation and replaced with a fair and mandatory distribution mechanism between Member States. This relocation mechanism should be based on objective criteria such as population and GDP. Moreover, any integration measures that form part of the European Asylum Procedure should involve swift access to the labour market.

Then, it is necessary to set up a functioning European Blue Card. It will allow migrants to cover EU's needs for skilled and unskilled workforce. The new EU Blue Card needs to be a realistic equivalent to the US Green Card to attract innovation and businesses and to facilitate start-ups hiring non-EU workers. To do so, a centralised data collection system needs to be created.

Finally, ALDE insists on creation of European Peace Plan plus Marshall Plan for the region. Hence, the European efforts at the Geneva talks should intensify and give full support to the democratic Syrian opposition forces. In addition, the EU must work to engage the US and the international community to develop a coherent strategy to defeat ISIS.

Hence, ALDE Parliamentary Group thinks that these actions will help to create a comprehensive European approach to migration and manage the refugee crisis effectively.

GUE/NGL

1 Which is the opinion your Parliamentary Group has on the possible new instruments of solidarity among EU Member states and new welfare tools for EU?

Over the last two decades the territorial units of sub-national level have increased their role and importance in many areas of social protection: from health care to social services, from active employment policies for inclusion. This trend is linked to two macro-factors. The first is endogenous and is connected to the growing difficulties of central governments in managing social policies on the financial and organisational level, however, in the presence of new guidelines and neo-localist movements. The second factor is the European integration, which has gradually relaxed the "security belts" around the regulative national states and provided incentives and resources capable of activating processes of "region-building", largely focused on its territorial differentiation of policies. The results of these processes are open for now. On the one hand, the re-regionalisation could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection instruments; on the other hand, it could trigger centrifugal dynamics, if not real, "deconstruction" of national welfare systems: a worrying scenario for its social and political consequences.

2 Within this topic, which is the most urgent issue you think is needed to be discussed?

Faced with a new set of needs and social demands, then, the traditional welfare systems have revealed the inadequacy of their facilities, continuing to provide very generous benefits for the risk protection that no longer generate the conditions needed for large groups of the population (such as the withdrawal from work) and neglecting, however, the new risk situations (featuring, for example, the dependent elderly and single mothers). This weakness of the social security institutions is particularly marked in continental and Mediterranean systems, in which the increased institutionalisation of social insurance has led to a sharp demarcation between included and excluded from the performance benefits.

One of the nodes of the bottom of the welfare reform strategies is the choice between universal or selective setting of public welfare policies. According to the selective setting, the provision of social benefits should be conditional on the economic situation of the beneficiaries, while the universalist criterion provides for the extension of benefits to the whole community, regardless of income and balance sheet conditions of individuals. The international policy debate, since the 80s, has dominated the selective principle as inspiring criterion of reform measures; Following this line, for example, they were made in Italy certain measures in the field social security and welfare, providing for the delivery of transfers conditioned on compliance with income limits (think of the discipline of family allowances). Subsequently, interventions such as the 1995 pension reform and the introduction Indicator of the economic situation, in 1998, they accepted the final statement of the selection criteria as a guiding principle of social policies

European social protection systems have different characteristics, reflecting the links between the methods of development of institutions and historical experiences, political and economic of the country. The various systems differ primarily with respect to the size and composition of public spending, to the institutional aspects, the types of services

provided and the funding mechanisms provided; consequently, social policy can be classified on the basis of the instruments used (transfers in cash or delivery of services), the rules of access (with proof, or less, of the conditions of need), the financing arrangements adopted (through general taxation or through social contributions) and organisational and management structure. Based on this categorisation it is possible to identify some common lines of evolution of social security systems and identify some relatively homogeneous macro-areas. The literature of social policy distinguishes four models of welfare state: the Social Democratic model (or Scandinavian), the liberal model (or Anglo-Saxon), the corporate model (or continental) and the Mediterranean model. And 'necessary to define a universal model or several models in relation to the reference area?

3 Which solution you propose and which kind of Proposal the Parliament should adopt on this issue?

- In support of family responsibilities policies, providing financial support to families with children. In this area it stands out transfers to households and maternity benefits, intended to offset the loss of income of the mother abstention from work;
- Explicit policies aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion. The main reference, in this case, is to support instruments of last resort income;
- Pensions type of care, granted to borrowers at a disadvantage and / or elderly people (disabled, elderly without or with insufficient contributory career careers to have an excess of the minimum old-age pension, the beneficiary families of contributions for the rental of ' housing, ...).

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