Resolution on strengthening social dialogue

2023/2536(RSP) - 01/06/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 483 votes to 38, with 100 abstentions, a resolution on strengthening social dialogue.

Social dialogue is crucial to ensure a balanced European labour market. However, the share of workers covered by collective agreements has declined significantly over the past 30 years, dropping from about 66% in 2000 to about 56% in 2018. Social dialogue must be protected in order for social partners to regulate themselves autonomously, ensuring total legitimacy and strong progress on collective agreement coverage. Moreover, social dialogue at national and Union level needs to be further supported and that more efforts are needed to support and promote collective bargaining coverage and prevent social partners' membership and organisational density from decreasing as well as to ensure that workplaces are well adapted to changes in the world of work in order to safeguard quality jobs. Further efforts are needed to provide sustainable solutions for organising and financing sectoral social dialogue committees.

The financial crisis and the pandemic have shown that countries with robust frameworks for social dialogue and high collective bargaining coverage tend to have more competitive, inclusive and resilient economies, as social partners played a major role in managing the crisis and mitigating its negative economic and social consequences.

Against this background, the resolution urged the Commission to:

- support and monitor the implementation of the recommendation at sectoral, national and Union level, jointly with the Member States and relevant social partners;

- promote collective bargaining, democracy at work and social dialogue through the European Semester, and specifically in the country-specific recommendations, to ensure decent wages through collective bargaining;

- analyse any labour reforms, in particular those related to working conditions and information and consultation of workers in the Member States' national recovery and resilience plans and engage with national authorities in order to help them address any possible shortcomings;

- enforce the social clause in the existing EU Public Procurement Directive;

- secure every European citizen the right to voluntarily organise in a trade union, strengthening worker's representation and securing social partners' rights to collectively bargain;

- further promote the use of ESF+ for capacity-building of social partners with the aim of strengthening collective bargaining in Europe.

The Commission and the Member States are called on to:

- involve and consult with the social partners in a timely manner in the design and implementation of social and employment policies and, where relevant, economic policies, and decision-making in open processes;

- ensure, with the involvement of social partners, an enabling environment for collective bargaining;

- work towards reaching collective bargaining coverage of at least 80 % by 2030, with a view to improving living and working conditions in the Union, contributing to upward social convergence, fighting in-work poverty and social exclusion and reducing wage inequality and precariousness;

- promote legislative reforms that ensure bargaining in good faith, prohibit unfair labour practices and anti-union discrimination and promote secure forms of employment while taking robust measures against precarious forms of employment, particularly affecting young workers;

- ensure that workers are provided with high-quality representation, that permanent forms of workers' representation are not displaced by ad hoc forms of representation without permanent structures;

- promote and facilitate freedom of association and collective bargaining in the informal economy as a means of raising worker's visibility and ensuring decent working conditions and social protection, as well as tackling undeclared work.

Lastly, convinced that introducing new digital technologies has the potential to have a positive impact on the work environment, Parliament stressed that new digital technologies and artificial intelligence should not replicate existing discrimination and societal biases but should help the social inclusion and participation of diverse groups.