



# THE ROAD FROM ROME

## A SOCIAL EUROPE

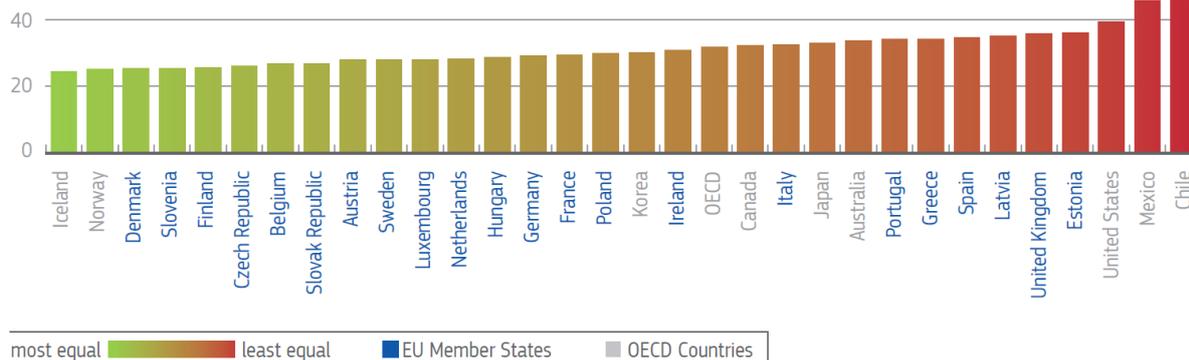


*“Since the start of my mandate, I have made clear that I wanted a more social Europe. We have taken important first steps to achieve that. This year will be crucial. Following the broad public consultation, it is time to establish the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Social Summit in Sweden will help us to deliver the momentum and put social priorities where they belong: at the top of Europe’s agenda.”*

*European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, 23 January 2017*

The social dimension of the European project dates back to the Treaties of Rome of 1957 which already included a provision guaranteeing equal pay for equal work for women and men. The background to the social Treaty provisions were mostly economic: greater movement of workers was key to meet business needs and as regards gender equality, France wanted to eliminate possible distortions in competition because it had adopted provisions on equal pay for men and women much earlier and feared that cheap female labour in Germany would put French businesses and the economy at a disadvantage.

### Europe is home to the most equal societies in the world



Note: This graph shows the distribution of income between individuals using the Gini coefficient where 0 represents perfect equality.  
Source: OECD, latest available data

Europe already has the world’s most advanced systems of welfare State around the world. Social protection systems will nevertheless need to be significantly modernised to remain affordable and to keep pace with new demographic and work-life realities.

### The Rome Declaration:

*“A social Europe: a Union which, based on sustainable growth, promotes economic and social progress as well as cohesion and convergence, while upholding the integrity of the internal market; (...) a Union which promotes equality between women and men as well as rights and equal opportunities for all; a Union which fights unemployment, discrimination, social exclusion and poverty; a Union where young people receive the best education and training and can study and find jobs across the continent”*

## THE CHALLENGE

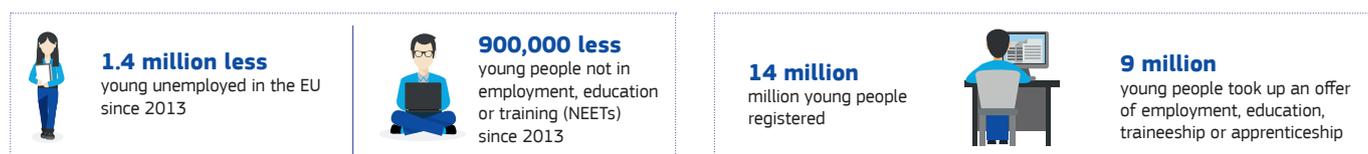
There has often been a gap between what people expect and what Europe is able to deliver on social Europe. For instance, in the fight against youth unemployment, EU initiatives such as the Youth Guarantee have helped 9 million people find opportunities, but remain a drop in the ocean in the continental fight against youth unemployment. The European Social Fund is highly effective but only represents 0.3% of what Europeans spend on social services.

It is therefore now time to look at how Europe can deliver a Union which “*promotes economic and social progress as well as cohesion and convergence*”, as called for by leaders in the **Rome Declaration** of 25 March 2017.

## YOUTH GUARANTEE DELIVERY

The Youth Guarantee is a political commitment taken by all EU Member States in April 2013 to give every person under the age of 25 a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

### Launched by the Commission, the Guarantee has helped put a dent in youth unemployment



## THE WAY FORWARD

From our proposals to boost the youth guarantee, to new and fair rules for the posting of workers and the coordination of social security systems, to the modernisation of health and safety legislation, the European Commission has acted resolutely to bring the social dimension back to the heart of Europe’s work. In April, the Commission will present its proposals on a European Pillar of Social Rights which will set out a number of essential principles to support well-functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems within the euro area.

In the Commission **White Paper on the Future of Europe**, several scenarios for how the social dimension of Europe can be taken forward are examined. For example:

- “*Those who want more do more*” (Scenario 3): A group of countries could chose to work together to agree on increasingly similar labour rights and social protection.
- “*Doing less more efficiently*” (Scenario 4): Member States could choose to enhance cooperation in other areas than social policy, meaning salaries and social legislation levels will continue to vary significantly across Europe.

## KEY DATES

April

European Commission reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe

**26 April**

European Commission presents proposals on European Pillar of Social Rights, accompanied by initiatives on access to social protection, the revision of the Written Statement Directive, the implementation of the Working Time Directive and the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families

November

**17 November**

Social Summit, Gothenburg, Sweden

