



**Statement on behalf of the EU  
and its Member States delivered by  
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Permanent Mission of Belgium**

**at the**

**62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission for Social Development  
Agenda Item 3(a) and (b)  
General Discussion  
New York**

**Monday, 5 February 2024**

Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Albania\*, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina\* and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

First, I would like to thank the Bureau and UN-DESA for their hard work preparing for this session.

The pandemic, geopolitical instability, Russia's war against Ukraine, inflation, and climate hazards have halted progress in global sustainable development and the **2030 Agenda**. The **SDG Summit** in New York last September reinvigorated efforts to accelerate implementation

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*\* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

through stronger policies, consistent with the SDG stimulus plan. Building on “Our Common Agenda” and the SDG Summit, momentum continues towards the **Summit of the Future** in 2024 and the **World Social Summit** in 2025. Rebuilding the **social contract** through a comprehensive approach based on **human rights, fundamental freedoms and labour standards** is key to overcome mistrust and build **social cohesion** and solidarity.

Turning to the **priority theme**: Promoting **social justice** and fostering the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of **eradicating poverty** are our fundamental aims enshrined in the Treaty on European Union.

On the EU level, we collaboratively advance **social justice**, for example under the European Pillar of Social Rights and its action plan. This encompasses principles and rights on equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. This includes building on social dialogue as a proven means to advance social justice and achieve a just transition.

The EU actively promotes the social dimension through its external action, including the **Global Gateway** strategy, which aims to support the implementation of SDGs. Particularly, the EU and its Member States stress the importance of implementing SDG 8 ‘Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’ and SDG 10 ‘Reduce inequality within and among countries’, as well as a range of initiatives monitoring and addressing the multidimensional aspects of inequality, like the **Inequality Marker** and the **Distributional Impact Assessment**. Several EU Member States have also pledged financial support for the **Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions**.

The EU and its Member States strongly support **the Global Coalition for Social Justice** and its ambition. There is an urgent need to actively promote social justice worldwide. The **ILO “Social Justice for All” Summit** highlighted the need to prioritize social justice at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let me also express the support of the European Union to the decision by **Brazil, as G20 Presidency**, to put a focus on combatting inequalities, which is a priority fully shared by the EU.

The EU and its Member States are promoting education and training, including apprenticeships, and preparing **young persons** for the digital and green transitions, for example through the new EU Child Guarantee and the reinforced Youth Guarantee. With the EU Action Plan on Youth in External Action, we are empowering young persons to engage in decision-making and policy-making in a meaningful and inclusive way. The 2023 European Year of Skills further highlighted the crucial role of education and skills development over the entire life course, with particular attention for upskilling and reskilling.

We also have a **Pact for Skills** which brings together companies, workers, local authorities, social partners, training providers and employment services to identify what skills will be needed in different sectors.

Promoting **equal rights, equal treatment and equal opportunities for all**, including participation in the labour market and **equal pay for work of equal value**, is one of the EU's founding principles. The EU and its Member States promote women and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights, gender equality, work-life balance, and the empowerment of women and girls as a priority across all areas of action. The EU works to further strengthen protection against discrimination at the workplace, including on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

It is essential that services and the digital and green transitions are **disability** inclusive and accessible. The EU and its Member States, as parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are committed to respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities across all policies. The EU confirmed its commitment in this field through the adoption of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, which also led to the adoption of the Disability Employment Package among other flagship initiatives.

The pandemic had more negative impacts on people in vulnerable situations, including on **older persons'** social and occupational inclusion, and right to health, as well as their participation in the digital transformation. We are committed to strengthen social inclusion and mutual solidarity between the generations and mainstream ageing in all policy fields in order to help societies and economies to adapt appropriately to demographic change with a view to developing societies that accommodate the needs and interests of persons of all ages. In this respect, the EU will meaningfully engage with the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing and stands ready to cooperate in the process of identifying possible gaps in the protection of the human rights of older persons in order to best address them.

Chair,

We look forward to rich discussions at this 62nd session of the Commission on Social Development, also in order to provide meaningful input to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July.

Thank you.