



1 April 2021

**Press release of the Bridge Forum Dialogue a.s.b.l.**

**Conference: *“The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan: a new step towards a stronger Social Europe”***

The Bridge Forum Dialogue a.s.b.l. organised, on Wednesday 31 March 2021 from 18:00 - 19:30, a video-conference with the Commissioner for Jobs and Social rights Nicolas Schmit, on the theme of “The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan: a new step towards a stronger Social Europe”.

Mariana Kotzeva, Director-General of Eurostat and Member of the Board of the Bridge Forum Dialogue, chaired the event.

Ms Kotzeva welcomed Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, recalling the importance of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan as a key part of the Commission policies and actions towards a stronger social Europe.

Commissioner Schmit underlined that the main aims of the European Pillar of Social Rights are sustainable growth, economic competitiveness and prosperity as well as social progress and cohesion across the Union. The Pillar reflects the joint commitment of the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission towards a stronger social Europe for the benefit of European citizens. The social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have made this commitment even more urgent.

Commissioner Schmit further explained the objectives and 2030 targets of the Action Plan in terms of employment, education and training, and the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The Member States will be called upon to endorse those objectives and targets at the Porto Social Summit in May 2021, to be held under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council.



Likewise, social partners, regional and local authorities as well as civil society are urged to join the collective efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Action Plan.

Commissioner Schmit stressed that the digital and ecological transition need to go hand in hand with a stronger social dimension to make European economies more innovative, competitive, sustainable and more responsive to the prosperity and well-being of European citizens.

Finally, Commissioner Schmit recalled the role that all European institutional actors present in Luxembourg will have to play to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the strengthening of a social Europe.

During the question and answer session, several topics relating, among others, to gender balance, accessibility for persons with disabilities, solidarity between generations, hybrid ways of working as well as the social economy were raised. Responding to the questions, Commissioner Schmit explained the actions taken by the Commission, including the Work-life Balance Directive and the European Disability Strategy, and he emphasised, in particular, the importance of lifelong learning and re-skilling opportunities to accompany adults through their careers. Commissioner Schmit also stressed the value of dialogue between social partners to find concrete solutions.

Ms Kotzeva concluded the conference by thanking Commissioner Schmit for the insights offered in regard to “The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan” and for his defence of a social Europe. She also thanked the participants for the fruitful discussions.

The video recording of the conference is available on the website of the Bridge Forum Dialogue: [www.forum-dialogue.lu](http://www.forum-dialogue.lu) and on the player page:

<https://www.bce.lu/une-europe-sociale-plus-forte/>



*Photo, from left to right*

Commissioner for Jobs and Social rights, Nicolas SCHMIT

Deputy Director General of Eurostat, Gallo GUEYE

