



# Social developments in the European Union: state of play 2017

## CONCLUSIONS

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# Today we presented and discussed

- **Questions** (relevant)
- **Analysis** (state of the art)
- **Proposals** (constructive)



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# The future of the European Union

## Further integration

### **Differentiated integration:** multi-speed Europe

- pragmatic perspective

## Disintegration

- the domino has not fallen – yet

# The future of the European Union

## A shared endeavor

**EU institutions:** time to be ambitious

- high hopes/high yields

**MS:** avoid 'blame shifting' and 'credit claiming' attitudes

**Research community:** sound analysis and constructively-critical proposals

**Social partners and civil society:** key role to play

**European citizens:** **what alternatives to the EU?**



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# The future of 'Social Europe': hope

The **European Pillar of Social Rights** can be said to be a landmark

Political legitimacy (social agenda), but what is the Pillar for?

- **Relaunching EU action in the social domain:** Pillar Package but a roadmap absolutely needed...
- **Influencing MS' policies:** European Semester and other policy tools
- **Influencing the contents of EU macro-economic and fiscal policies: a 'social imbalances procedure'?**



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# A more balanced Semester

The European Pillar of Social Rights at its heart

Beyond the mantra of fiscal consolidation

A shift towards **social investment**

**Transparency, openness and ownership**



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# Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

**A renewed commitment to inclusive growth and to fighting poverty and social exclusion**

- **Embedding EU ambitions into the UN Sustainable development goals**
  - *to reduce poverty by half* between 2015 and 2030
- **A renewed commitment from the MS**

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# Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

**Further improving the EU's socio-economic governance**

**Less stringent interpretation of budgetary rules**

**Relaunching 'social investment' (e.g. by excluding expenditure for **education** from public deficit calculation)**

**Involving national stakeholders in the elaboration of NRPs and in the implementation of the CSRs**



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# Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

**Promoting a ‘European Social Union’** (“a Union of MS, with their own welfare systems but supported and oriented by the EU” (Vandenbroucke et al., 2014)

- **Common unemployment benefit schemes** and a **Framework Directive on minimum income.**
- **A Skills Guarantee** (European Parliament)
- **A European Child Guarantee** (a EU basic income for children)



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# Looking forward: moving to high hopes and high yields

## Making 'social protection for all' a reality

*First, understanding the nature of the challenge:*

- **Drawing lessons** from MS' good practices
- **Organising in-depth knowledge** of the way social protection of non-standard workers and the self-employed is financed in the MS
- **Addressing data and knowledge gaps**
- Tackling burning **definitional issues**



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# The time to act is now

## Eurobarometer survey 2017

- 56% of Europeans are optimistic about the future of the EU
- 42% of Europeans trust the EU
- 40% of Europeans have a positive image of the EU
- **68% of Europeans feel they are 'citizens of the EU'**

**A European demos waiting for answers**

**It is now time to move from high hopes to high yields!**



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(It is also time for a drink and a thank you)



# Thank you for your attention



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