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ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

Outline of the 35th Bi-annual Report of COSAC

Chapter 1: Action Plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights

Strengthening the European social model as a response to the crisis and as a driver of growth is one of the European Union's current priorities. In this context, and following the [COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION – A STRONG SOCIAL EUROPE FOR JUST TRANSITIONS \(COM\(2020\)14 final\)](#), in January 2020, the plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights will be presented in 2021.

The Pillar is the EU's social strategy to make sure that the transitions of climate-neutrality, digitalisation and demographic change are socially fair and just. Proclaimed by all EU institutions in 2017, the 20 principles of the Pillar aim at improving equal opportunities and jobs for all, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. Implementing them upholds the commitment, made at the highest level, that people are at the centre, regardless of change, and that no one is left behind. Building on the work done in the past, it is now time to turn commitment into further action.

Since many of the instruments to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights are national competences, it is essential to ascertain, for example, what national measures have been taken to this end and how national Parliaments/Chambers are scrutinising and monitoring these issues, including their mainstreaming within the scope of the European Semester (online social scoreboard to track trends and performances across EU countries). On the other hand, it will be important to identify priority areas (Youth Guarantee, Child Guarantee, Fair Wages, education and training, digital literacy, equality, etc.), especially in view of the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic and the different impact this had on our societies, while also sharing best practices on concrete measures to implement Pillar actions.

Chapter 2: EU-Africa Strategy

The European Union's relations with Africa are divided into two separate legal frameworks: the Cotonou Agreements and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. In addition to these frameworks, the regional strategies for the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel deserve special mention.

Cooperation with Africa covers areas such as trade, development, security, climate and digital transition, migration and counter-terrorism.

EU-Africa summits, which provide the opportunity for a formal dialogue to discuss the various topics linking the EU and Africa, are also part of this framework.

In this context, the Bi-annual Report will seek to understand how national Parliaments/Chambers monitor the European Union's strategies with Africa, which actions and areas are most relevant, and what future looks like for this framework of relations. It will also seek to identify possible ways to deepen the parliamentary dialogue between the EU and Africa.



Chapter 3: Next Generation EU: scrutiny of National Recovery and Resilience Plans – implications for the European Semester

Following the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the European Union launched an unprecedented plan to recover the European economy. The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), set up within this scope, is part of Next Generation EU (NGEU) – the EUR 750 billion plan that will help Member States address the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst ensuring that their economies undertake the green and digital transitions, thus becoming more sustainable and resilient.

In order to receive support from the RRF, Member States must prepare national recovery and resilience plans setting out their reform and investment agendas until 2026, implemented in connection with the European Semester cycle.

It is important to understand how these plans will be defined, approved and implemented in the Member States, including as regards key investment areas, and their alignment with the EU priority areas. The deadline for submitting these plans to the European Commission, for approval by the Council, is 30 April 2021, so particular emphasis will be placed on the possible involvement of national Parliaments/Chambers in the prioritisation process, as well as on analysing potential best practices regarding future governance and monitoring of their implementation within the framework of the European Semester, including the role of the European Parliament in this context.

Chapter 4: Conference on the Future of Europe

Announced within the scope of the Political Guidelines of the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, as a project to give European citizens a louder voice on the medium to long term future of the EU, its policies and institutions,, The start of the Conference's work was postponed in view of the pandemic situation, as well as the need for the adoption of a Joint Declaration by the three European institutions on its concept, structure, scope, calendar, and the definition of its principles and objectives.

This chapter will follow up on some of the issues raised in the 34th Bi-annual Report, including the priority areas to be discussed, in terms of concrete policies and institutional issues, as well as determine which initiatives national Parliaments/Chambers intend to develop, and identify best practices in terms of formats. Furthermore, given that the Conference is due to last until 2022, the report will also assess the timing that national Parliaments/Chambers deem appropriate for adopting final positions on the topics under discussion and what the follow-up to them will be.

