

Main messages from the Tripartite Social Summit, 20 March 2024

EU leaders and social partners met in Brussels for the tripartite social summit. The main theme of the summit was **'An economically and socially strong Europe to play its role in the world'**.

The participants discussed the following issues:


- an industrial strategy complementing the green deal with quality jobs at its heart
- a single market that delivers for enterprises and workers
- tackling skills and labour shortages

We are in a moment of transition. The EU project is based on two pillars: security and competitiveness. We are now building a new paradigm to tackle our double transformation – climate and digital. We need to deepen the internal market on energy, services and capital. We must also address labour and skills shortages that hinder our businesses and the competitiveness of our single market, while taking into account the fundamental role of SMEs. Our social partners play a key role helping us achieve these goals. *Charles Michel, President of the European Council*

In the current geopolitical context, shaping our future is a real collective effort. And social partners are at the heart of it. We are committed to keeping our competitiveness and to a made in Europe clean economy, with the quality jobs that go with it. Europe is underpinning these joint efforts with unprecedented funding opportunities, with a focus on cutting red tape and on granting even more rights to workers. And we will continue to tackle labour and skills shortages, also thanks to the action plan we have presented today. *Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission*

The need for skilled workers has never been so high. The need for the right work-life balance and quality jobs has never been so strongly felt in our societies. Social dialogue stands central in the work of the Belgian presidency. This summit gives further impetus for an ambitious and future-proof social agenda. *Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister of Belgium, on behalf of the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU*

In 2023, European enterprises continued to seek to drive the EU's green and digital transitions, and their task was made more difficult by high energy costs, an increasing regulatory burden and continuing geopolitical uncertainty. Furthermore, they have felt the effects of reduced consumer demand for private goods and services in a context of increased financing costs linked to higher interest rates and increasing demand for affordable and accessible services of general interest. To make sure that the European Union decarbonises without deindustrialising, a European Industrial Deal needs to be developed with tailored measures to support SMEs in their transition. Creating the conditions to have more growth and a strong industry supported by high-quality services of general interest is essential to foster sufficient investment for the green transition, necessary infrastructures and quality jobs in small, medium-sized and large companies. *Fredrik Persson, President of BusinessEurope, representing employers (BusinessEurope, SGI Europe, SMEunited)*



The workforce that powers Europe is as essential to the continent's future success as it has been in the past. To ensure that future is bright, the EU must equip itself with an industrial policy with quality jobs at its centre, built on three essential pillars. Firstly, we need an EU investment instrument that matches the scale of this challenge to ensure investments in all member states and regions. Secondly, strong social conditionality is needed to make sure every cent of public money is geared towards protecting and creating quality jobs. Thirdly, in an increasingly volatile world, the EU needs the capacity to anticipate and manage change through a Directive for Just Transition. *Esther Lynch, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)*

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