



Statement by Commissioner Nicolas Schmit ahead of International Workers' Day

Brussels, 30 April 2024

Ahead of International Workers' Day, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas **Schmit**, made the following statement:

"On 1 May, as we celebrate International Workers' Day, we reflect on the progress the EU has made over the past year in advancing workers' rights and opportunities in Europe.

The European Year of Skills has ignited a skills revolution, turning the attention of policy-makers, companies and individuals to the importance of continuous training to meet the needs of the EU's evolving labour market. Through initiatives like the Pact for Skills, which provided training to 3.5 million workers in 2022-2023 alone, we are building partnerships to invest in the workforce of tomorrow. As the Year officially reaches its conclusion, we must keep the skills fire burning.

We have also reached significant milestones in employment legislation: new EU rules will improve the working conditions for people working on digital labour platforms, ensuring millions of workers receive the labour rights and social protection they deserve. In addition, the Commission presented a Directive and a Council Recommendation to improve the quality of traineeships in the EU, so that more young people can gain practical work experience, learn new skills and find a good quality job. Member States are making progress in implementing the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages, with the transposition deadline of November this year approaching. Teleworking and the right to disconnect are the next pieces of the puzzle: the Commission has launched a consultation of social partners to gather their views. The Commission remains committed to take action in this crucial aspect of working life with a view to putting forward an effective and balanced legislative proposal. This is vital for maintaining a healthy work-life balance and for protecting the mental and physical well-being of workers.

A key feature of Europe's social market economy is social dialogue, and over the past year we have dedicated efforts to strengthening it further. We have revised the European Works Council Directive, to make the consultation process with workers on big decisions more meaningful and timely. The Commission and the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU hosted the Val Duchesse Social Partner Summit, where social partners renewed their commitment to tackling key challenges in our economies and labour markets. As a follow-up to the summit, in March, the Commission presented an action plan to tackle the important issue of labour and skills shortages with concrete measures to be implemented swiftly at the EU, national, and social-partners' level.

In our ongoing efforts to tackle unemployment, we have launched two new funding projects: one reaching out to NEETs (young people not in education, employment, or training) and one aimed at helping long-term unemployed individuals return to work. By prioritising these vulnerable groups, we reaffirm that a social Europe leaves no one behind.

A strong, resilient and competitive economy is only possible when it is accompanied by strong social protection and inclusion. Over the past five years, during this Commission's mandate, we have been systematically including workers' rights, fairness and the social dimension throughout all EU policies. While more remains to be done, we can be proud of the progress we have made.

My best wishes to all on this Labour Day."

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