



PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF THE PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS

Thanks to the EU and the PES Group, European citizens' social and employment rights are getting stronger and stronger. The EU is a unique model of integration since, unlike other regional unions, in addition to striving for a successful single market, it has actively promoted and advanced its citizens' social and employment rights.

A brief glance at the history of the EU's employment and social affairs tells us that this policy has gone from strength to strength. Originally conceived as a flanking policy, something to simply accompany the European economic project, it began to claw back some power during the 1970s, 1980s and the early 1990s. During these years, thanks to Europe's social policy, several workers' rights were secured, from the freedom of movement for migrant workers, to the health and safety of employees at work, to parental leave whereby every worker acquired the right to take parental leave for each child they have.

The 2000 European Council's summit in Lisbon is a true testimony to just how far the European Union's employment and social policy has come: employment and social policies were considered fundamental in making the EU the most dynamic and competitive economy in the world. Employment and Social affairs *have* to become a horizontal policy area in their own right: they should be taken into account in *all* other policy areas.

The European Parliament and the PES Group: tireless champions of employment and social affairs

Bread and butter social and employment policies would not be in the prominent position that they are today without the PES Group's tireless efforts to put them firmly on Europe's agenda. Our goal has *consistently* been to fight for full employment; to improve working conditions, to give employees information and consultation rights, to improve living conditions for the poor and socially excluded, and to ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

The PES Group

A natural champion of European citizens' employment and social rights, the PES Group and its Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have guided and successfully shaped the employment debate time and again. Some PES success stories:

- **Health and Safety at work**

The PES Group secured workers' protection from the risks related to exposure to asbestos and lowered legal limits of asbestos in the work place, including the demolition and maintenance industries. It also protected workers from risks arising from exposure to noise in supporting the establishment of severe limits to exposure and by ensuring that wearing individual hearing protectors.



- **Fight against discrimination**

Thanks to the PES group's commitment, the EU adopted two important directives to fight discrimination in daily life and in the work place. This means that – according to Article 13 of the Treaty – the EU has taken appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

- **Working time**

The PES Group fought to guarantee that all workers are covered by EU legislation relating to working time, including workers in the transport sector, junior doctors and off-shore (mainly oil sector) workers.

- **Information and consultation**

The PES Group fought for the adoption of a general framework for informing and consulting employees in EU companies with more than 50 workers or in establishments with more than 20.

- **Atypical workers**

The PES Group contributed to a positive balance between flexibility and security, in supporting framework agreements between the EU social partners on part-time work, fixed term contracts and teleworking.

- **Furthermore**, by submitting worker-friendly and socially aware amendments to legislation in all parliamentary committees – such as public procurement and takeover bids – the PES wants to inject social values into the content of otherwise hard economic EU legislation.


Widening and Deepening: the future of the EU's Employment and Social Affairs

PES Group MEPs are conscious of the challenges posed to the EU by its pending enlargement. They are actively seeking to ensure that social and employment issues, including the establishment of an effective social dialogue are fully transposed in the accession countries. We are working together with the accession countries so that they may rapidly become involved in Europe's fast paced and ever expanding employment and social affairs.

Thanks to the work of the **European Convention**, EU employment and social affairs will be reinforced. A lot remains to be done, but Socialist MEPs in the European Parliament are definitely up to the challenge.



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