



Shaping the future of social Europe

Policy brief

August 2020

Objective

EUROCITIES is mobilising all members of our Social Affairs Forum to take part in a coordinated advocacy to raise a loud voice from cities to shape the future of social Europe with a strong urban dimension and position cities as key partners in EU social policies.

Policy context

The European Commission led by President Ursula von der Leyen aims to achieve further progress towards the full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. It plans to launch an action plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights to set out new EU policy actions and legal initiatives in the employment and social policy field.

With this in mind, the European Commission has opened a broad [public consultation on the future of social Europe](#). The consultation is open until end of November 2020. It will gather proposals for new EU social policies. The Commission will use the inputs from the public consultation to shape the action plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which is expected to be announced presented in spring 2021 at the EU Social Summit.

The discussion on the social dimension of Europe is part of the broader debate around the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the discussion on reinforcing social Europe is strongly linked to mitigating the social consequences of the crisis and building a fair and inclusive recovery in Europe.

Background

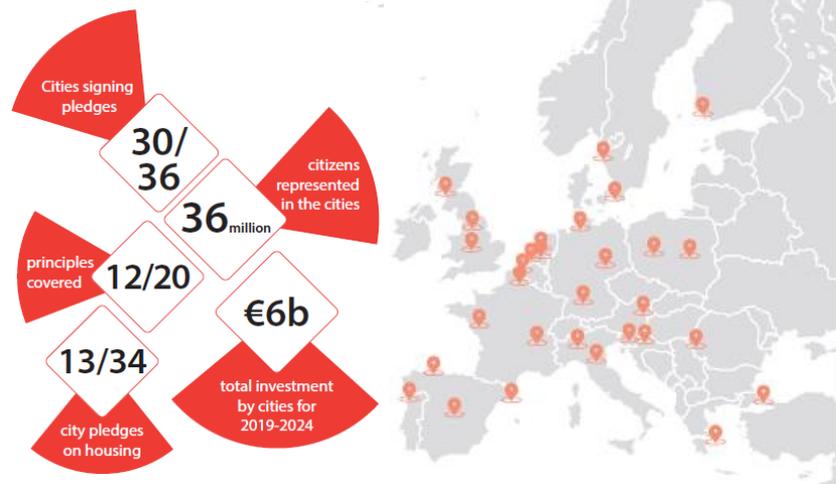
The European Pillar of Social Rights is the EU's social strategy to make sure that the transitions of climate-neutrality, digitalisation and demographic change, as well as the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, are socially fair and just. It builds upon 20 principles:

Equal opportunities and access to the labour market	Fair working conditions	Adequate and sustainable social protection
1. Education, training and life-long learning 2. Gender equality 3. Equal opportunities 4. Active support to the unemployed 5. Secure and adaptable employment	6. Wages 7. Information about employment conditions and protection in case of dismissals 8. Social dialogue and involvement of workers 9. Work-life balance 10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment	11. Childcare and support to children 12. Social Protection 13. Unemployment benefits 14. Minimum income 15. Old age income, pensions 16. Health care 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities 18. Long-term care 19. Housing and assistance for the homeless 20. Access to essential services

What is EUROCITIES doing?

1. Political campaign of city pledges

Since 2019, EUROCITIES is running a political campaign 'Inclusive Cities4all: Social Rights in My City' to engage city mayors and deputy mayors to pledge on implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights by taking concrete actions and social investments at local level. To this date, we have reached 40 city pledges, representing 36 million citizens, and totalling an investment of over €6.5 billion towards implementing these



principles and social rights. To raise awareness and give visibility to the city pledges, we developed a dedicated website www.inclusivecities4all.eu

With this campaign and city pledges, we show that cities are allies of the European Commission in pushing the European Pillar of Social Rights forward. We prove our commitment to EPSR implementation with real actions on the ground and we can inspire national governments to build on our local measures with national policies. We also demonstrate that cities know how to do social investments to benefit as many people at local level as possible and bring social rights for all. This makes a good case for engaging cities as partners in EU social policy-making and in implementing EU funds. One of five policy objectives for cohesion policy for 2021-2027 is to support a **more social Europe by implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights**. Hence, by showing that cities are committed and act on the Pillar, cities are best positioned to access and use the EU funds.

2. Policy statement

We have developed a policy statement with members' inputs on building a stronger social Europe with inclusive cities, presenting concrete proposals for policy actions and arguments on how to strengthen the urban dimension of the EU social agenda. We want to use this statement as a strong and united voice from cities to respond to the EU public consultation.

3. High-level policy event

EUROCITIES is organising a Digital High-Level Conference 'Building back better: A stronger social Europe - What role for cities?' on 30 September.

The event will bring city representatives in direct dialogue with EU leaders to discuss how to move social Europe forward and drive a fair and inclusive recovery, leaving no one behind. We will discuss the new statement to be announced by EUROCITIES on how to work together with cities on new priorities and proposals for reinforcing social Europe. A special focus will be given to addressing the rising poverty and inequalities in cities. The increasing demand for social services in cities and how the EU can support social investment at local level will also be discussed. This event will contribute to the EU consultation on reinforcing social Europe and feed into the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan. Our aim is to get cities invited with a formal role to the EU social summit in 2021 to discuss the EPSR action plan.

What can your city do?

1. Join with a city pledge

Join our EUROCIITIES campaign with a city pledge to get recognised at EU level as a champion city for inclusive policies, equal opportunities and social rights.

Choose one or more of the 20 principles of [the European Pillar of Social Rights](#) to focus your commitment and actions. The pledge should be signed by your mayor or deputy mayor in charge of social affairs. To help you formulate your pledge, you can draw inspiration from the [40 city pledges here](#).

2. Submit a city response to the EU public consultation

To make our voice from cities heard in this massive EU consultation, we encourage all our members to submit an entry online on the [webpage of the EU public consultation](#). There is no survey to answer, just an open field to write your views on the future of social Europe or else you can directly upload a document as your contribution. We advise all members to draw your contributions based on the EUROCIITIES statement and add concrete examples and arguments from your own city.

Your city's contribution can be:

- A. **a pledge** - we encourage all our members that already signed pledges to the European Pillar of Social Rights to upload their city pledge also on the Commission website (simple upload button)
- B. **submit your city input for new initiatives at EU, national, regional or local level** - if your city already has a position on how to strengthen (urban dimension into) EU social policies or drive a fair or inclusive recovery in Europe, you can upload this on the webpage (simple upload)

3. Take part in online consultations with the European Commissioner

The European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmidt, is doing a series of virtual consultation webinars on the future of social Europe with stakeholders in each member state. We have managed to get the Commission to open up these online consultations to cities. The virtual consultations are organised per member state, so several cities from the same country will join the same webinar with Commissioner Schmit. The dates will be set according to the Commissioner's agenda. [Find out more about these virtual consultations with Commissioner Schmit](#)

This is a unique opportunity to have city representatives discuss online with Commissioner Schmit concrete ideas and proposals how to bring European solutions to address the social challenges in cities in particular the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The webinars are held on country-by-country basis, hence cities from the same country can join the same webinar and raise a coordinated strong message to the Commissioner.

Are you interested? Send us a list of names of representatives from your city to join this online discussion with Commissioner Schmit (ideally to consider the city mayor, deputy mayors in charge of social policies, city director for social/employment services etc.)

Contact

For more information or further details, please contact Bianca Faragau, senior policy advisor at EUROCITIES, via email at Bianca.Faragau@eurocities.eu or by phone at +32 2 552 08 52.

Useful resources

- European Commission webpage to the EU public consultation on the future of social Europe: [Have your say on reinforcing Social Europe](#) - link to [submit your contribution](#)
- European Commission webpage: [Commission launches consultation roadshow](#)
- European Commission webpage: [European Pillar of Social Rights in 20 principles](#)
- EUROCITIES website for city pledges campaign: www.inclusivecities4all.eu
- European Commission (January 2020). [Commission Communication on a strong social Europe for just transitions](#)
- European Commission (2019). [Political guidelines for the European Commission for 2019-2024.](#)
- EUROCITIES (2019). [Cities delivering social rights. Early childhood education and child welfare in cities in Europe.](#)
- EUROCITIES (2018). [Cities delivering social rights: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market in cities in Europe.](#)
- EUROCITIES (2017). EUROCITIES Statement - [Social Rights for All: Cities are committed to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)
- European Commission (2017). [Reflection paper on the social dimension on the future of Europe](#)
- Eurostat database for [social scoreboard of indicators to monitor progress in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)



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