



C/2023/400

23.11.2023

P9_TA(2023)0076

Adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion

European Parliament resolution of 15 March 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (2022/2840(RSP))

(C/2023/400)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Articles 4, 9, 14, 19, 151 and 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and the related action plan,
- having regard to the Porto declaration,
- having regard to the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979,
- having regard to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was reconfirmed during the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, and in particular Articles 3, 16, 18, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 29 thereof,
- having regard to the 1966 UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
- having regard to the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the UN in 2015, in particular Goals 1 and 10,
- having regard to International Labour Organization Conventions Nos 26 and 131 on minimum wage fixing and Nos 29 and 105 on the abolition of forced labour,
- having regard to Articles 34, 35 and 36 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the ‘Charter’), which explicitly define the right to social security and social assistance, a high level of human health protection and access to services of general economic interest,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 24 June 1992 on common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in social protection systems ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2010 on the role of minimum income in combating poverty and promoting an inclusive society in Europe ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2017 on minimum income policies as a tool for fighting poverty ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the questions to the Council and to the Commission on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (O-000050/2022 — B9-0008/2023 and O-000051/2022 — B9-0009/2023),
- having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 245, 26.8.1992, p. 46.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 41, 3.2.2023, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 8.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 156.

- A. whereas in 2021, 95,4 million people in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE), representing 21,7 % of the EU population ⁽⁵⁾; whereas poverty and social exclusion are a matter of individual and collective social responsibility; whereas the current crisis, consisting of interlinked factors including the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and climate change, has left people facing a higher cost of living and increased the AROPE rate; whereas a World Bank report estimated that an additional 68 to 135 million people worldwide could be pushed into poverty by 2030 as a result of climate change ⁽⁶⁾;
- B. whereas minimum income support is a non-contributory benefit provided to people lacking sufficient resources and fulfilling national eligibility criteria, and should be considered an integral part of comprehensive national rights-based social protection systems; whereas minimum income schemes (MISs) are defined as benefits and services that together constitute a safety net for people who, whether in or out of employment, would otherwise lack sufficient resources for themselves and their dependents to live in dignity ⁽⁷⁾;
- C. whereas poverty and social exclusion are multifaceted concepts that must therefore be tackled through a holistic and dynamic approach that includes measures to ensure access to enabling goods and services, such as education, training and skills development; whereas such an approach should focus on individuals and their circumstances and be part of an effective anti-poverty strategy; whereas adequately funded and resourced MISs are an important and effective way of overcoming poverty and promoting social inclusion; whereas the social stigma attached to lacking resources contributes to feelings of shame that may obscure the real magnitude of poverty in society;
- D. whereas Eurostat defines the AROPE rate as the sum of people who are at risk of poverty, severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity;
- E. whereas the gender poverty gap has been growing wider for the past five years, as women are increasingly and disproportionately affected by poverty and the risk of social exclusion in comparison with men, in particular older women, women with disabilities, Roma women, women who experience intersectional forms of discrimination and single mothers; whereas COVID-19-related confinement measures had a disproportionate impact on women and people in vulnerable situations, particularly in terms of a higher burden of informal care work, as a result of limited access to healthcare, education and other social services; whereas the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work among men and women presents a crucial factor in determining whether women enter into and stay in employment, the sectors and occupations in which they work, how many hours they spend in paid work, and the quality of the jobs that they perform; whereas 80 % of long-term care in Europe is provided by informal carers and they are more likely to face poverty and social exclusion, as 42 % of non-working carers are in the lowest income quartile and 59 % of non-working carers have difficulty in making ends meet ⁽⁸⁾;
- F. whereas in 2020, the AROPE rate for people aged 15-29 years old was 25,4 % in the EU, corresponding to about 18,1 million people;
- G. whereas around 35 % of the working-age AROPE population in the EU may not be covered by minimum income or any other social benefits ⁽⁹⁾; whereas 20 % of unemployed people at risk of poverty in the EU are not eligible to receive any income support; whereas the non-take-up rate for MISs in the EU is estimated at 30-50 % of the eligible population ⁽¹⁰⁾; whereas the benefit systems in place across the Member States vary significantly; whereas in 2016, most Member States' MISs were insufficient to guarantee every person a decent standard of living ⁽¹¹⁾; whereas ensuring adequate minimum income support as a tool to fight poverty not only fosters social cohesion but is also an investment in people and the economy, as it helps to boost internal demand;

⁽⁵⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20211015-1>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/10/07/global-action-urgently-needed-to-halt-historic-threats-to-poverty-reduction>

⁽⁷⁾ <https://www.caritas.eu/minimum-income-schemes-to-ensure-dignity-for-all>

⁽⁸⁾ https://eurocarers.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Eurocarers-Needs_final.pdf

⁽⁹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1092>

⁽¹⁰⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1092>

⁽¹¹⁾ <https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-ESPN-report-minimum-income.pdf>, p. 22.

- H. whereas climate change has disproportionately impacted poor and low- and medium-income households, since extreme weather has caused inflation in various sectors, such as energy, food items ('heatflation' ⁽¹²⁾), clothes and electronics, and damage to housing owing to wildfires and flooding, as well as having an impact on health; whereas Europe is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and is facing a rise in the cost of living as a result of high inflation ⁽¹³⁾, particularly in the food, commodities and energy markets, which has been exacerbated by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; whereas, according to the initial findings of a Eurofound analysis, most of the reported policy measures to cushion the effects of soaring energy prices and rising inflation are temporary, ad hoc measures ⁽¹⁴⁾; whereas measures targeting vulnerable groups are more likely to take the form of general financial support; whereas in 2020, energy poverty remained a major challenge for around 35 million EU citizens, approximately 8 % of the EU population ⁽¹⁵⁾;
- I. whereas the current emergency calls for the promotion of national MISs that ensure a decent quality of life for all those who meet specific eligibility criteria, while upskilling people excluded from the labour market, guaranteeing equal opportunities and upholding fundamental rights;
- J. whereas Principles 12 and 13 of the European Social Charter respectively state that 'all workers and their dependents have the right to social security' and that 'anyone without adequate resources has the right to social and medical assistance' ⁽¹⁶⁾; whereas Article 34(3) of the Charter recognises the right to social and housing assistance so as to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources;
- K. whereas Principle 3 of the EPSR proclaims that 'everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities regarding employment, social protection, education, and access to goods and services available to the public', Principle 4 states that 'everyone has the right to timely and tailor-made assistance to improve employment or self-employment prospects', and Principle 14 states that 'Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling goods and services' and that for those who can work, 'minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market';
- L. whereas the Council has set 2030 headline targets in the areas of poverty, employment and skills, one of which is to reduce the number of AROPE people by at least 15 million by 2030 compared to 2019;
- M. whereas today, various types of MISs are in place across all the Member States, but their impact has not been sufficient in terms of upward convergence or the reduction of poverty ⁽¹⁷⁾; whereas every European country has set its schemes at a level below its at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) threshold, and some such schemes do not even reach 20 % of the AROPE threshold, which in practical terms means that those receiving minimum income do not have enough income to make ends meet; whereas the Member States have made uneven progress in ensuring the adequacy, coverage and take-up of MISs, as well as in the implementation of labour market activation measures and measures providing access to other enabling goods and services; whereas take-up rates are low ⁽¹⁸⁾ and there is a lack of coordination between income support, active labour market policies and social services; whereas national MISs are part of wider social protection systems and this should be taken into account when assessing their effectiveness;
- N. whereas the policy coordination mechanisms used in the last 30 years, such as the Council Recommendation of 24 June 1992 on common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in social protection systems, reinforced by the Commission Recommendation of 3 October 2008 on the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market ⁽¹⁹⁾, have not proven efficient enough to address the challenges identified and to reduce social exclusion and

⁽¹²⁾ <https://foodinstitute.com/focus/analysis-how-heatflation-is-heating-up-food-prices/>

⁽¹³⁾ https://ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/AnotherPerfectStorm.pdf

⁽¹⁴⁾ <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/article/2022/first-responses-to-cushion-the-impact-of-inflation-on-citizens>

⁽¹⁵⁾ https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/energy-consumer-rights/energy-poverty-eu_en and <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20211105-1>

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://rm.coe.int/168006b642>, p. 2.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Commission proposal of 28 September 2022 for a Council recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (COM(2022)0490) and the accompanying Commission staff working document of the same date (SWD(2022)0313).

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10417#navItem-relatedDocuments>, p. 4.

⁽¹⁹⁾ OJ L 307, 18.11.2008, p. 11.

poverty in an effective, integrated and sustainable manner; whereas in recent years, most Member States have taken steps towards improving their MISs, in combination with other social policies, yet this action has not been sufficient to address the challenges identified; whereas reforms at national level have not been comprehensive enough and the implementation thereof has often lagged; whereas the evidence shows an increase in income inequalities across several Member States in recent decades and social exclusion remains a significant challenge;

- O. whereas women, single-parent households, people with disabilities or long-term diseases, Roma communities living in settlements, people with migrant or minority backgrounds, young and older people, homeless people, the LGBTIQ+ community, unemployed people and people trying to re-enter the labour market after a long absence are those most affected by or at risk of falling into poverty; whereas the risk of poverty is also higher for workers in atypical employment relationships; whereas young people are often unable to access unemployment benefits because they do not meet the minimum contribution requirements; whereas discriminatory minimum age requirements also deprive young people of minimum income benefits; whereas reducing long-term unemployment can play a key role in effectively combating poverty; whereas in its Recommendation of 30 January 2023, the Council recognises, per the Commission proposal, that solutions facilitating the receipt of income support by individual members of the household can contribute to the economic independence and income security of women and young adults;
- P. whereas people with disabilities are more likely to live in or be at risk of poverty than people without disabilities, owing to barriers in society such as discrimination, limited access to education and employment and a lack of inclusion; whereas in 2021, the AROPE rate among people with a disability in the EU was 29,7 %, compared to 18,8 % for the rest of the population ⁽²⁰⁾; whereas many people with disabilities across the EU work in segregated, sheltered employment settings, where they do not always enjoy the same labour rights and status as people working in the open labour market;
- Q. whereas the AROPE rate is higher among older people (aged 75 and above), pensioners with disabilities and pensioners who have experienced long-term unemployment or been absent from the labour market for a long period to provide childcare or other forms of care ⁽²¹⁾; whereas in 2020, the AROPE rate among retired people in the EU was 15,6 %; whereas the gender pay and pension gaps remain large and respectively stood at 13 % in 2020 ⁽²²⁾ and 29 % in 2019 ⁽²³⁾; whereas older women have often not accrued sufficient pension rights to ensure a life free from poverty and social exclusion, and many rely on the incomes and savings of their partner or derived pension rights (survivors' pensions); whereas women's greater longevity means that many have to face the costs of living alone in older age; whereas insufficient pensions and the failure to adjust existing pensions to the increasing cost of living have a dire impact on older people, in particular those who are AROPE;
- R. whereas high-quality jobs are the best way to lift people out of poverty and whereas appropriate upskilling and reskilling pathways, tailored to individual needs, are essential to reintegrate people, in particular workers aged over 50 years old, into the labour market;
- S. whereas Article 156 TFEU sets out that the provision and management of social security systems is a Member State competence, which the Union coordinates but does not harmonise;
- T. whereas the energy crisis and inflation have the potential to increase the number of people affected by insecurity, poverty and social exclusion; whereas tackling unemployment is the best way to combat poverty;

1. Recalls that at the Porto Summit, the Commission, the social partners and civil society committed to reducing the number of people living in poverty or experiencing social exclusion in the EU by at least 15 million, including at least 5 million children, by 2030; recalls that the EU failed to achieve its target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty by 2020; stresses that the AROPE rate is the share of people with an equivalised disposable income below the threshold of 60 % ⁽²⁴⁾ of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers; is concerned that Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine has caused sharp increases in energy prices and inflation,

⁽²⁰⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_-_poverty_and_income_inequalities

⁽²¹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tespn100/default/bar?lang=en>

⁽²²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics

⁽²³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210203-1>

⁽²⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:At-risk-of-poverty_rate#:~:text=The%20at%20risk%20of%20disposable%20income%20after%20social%20transfers

which are likely to exacerbate the cost-of-living crisis and push an increasing number of people into poverty and social exclusion unless action is taken rapidly; stresses that poverty is not solely a lack of economic means, but is rather a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses a lack of both income and access to essential goods and services, and thus the basic conditions for living in dignity and participating in society; notes that people living in poverty and experiencing social exclusion often face a vicious circle of many interrelated and mutually reinforcing deprivations that prevent them from enjoying their rights and perpetuate their poverty and social exclusion;

2. Underlines that the EU target on poverty reduction is unlikely to be reached in the coming years unless the Member States modernise and strengthen their social protection systems in a manner that fosters social inclusion and supports people who are able to work by providing pathways to high-quality employment; is concerned about the pressure that the current cost-of-living crisis is placing on disadvantaged people and households, in particular in the form of rising inflation and energy prices, and urges the Member States to increase their targeted support for those most in need;

3. Stresses that more efforts are necessary to fight poverty and social exclusion; calls on the Member States to gradually increase their minimum income support for people lacking sufficient resources to a level that is at least equivalent to the national AROPE threshold or the monetary value of necessary goods and services according to the national definitions, or to other comparable levels established by national law and practice, and to urgently address issues relating to adequacy, coverage and take-up; acknowledges the differences in national protection systems and underlines the fact that reference budgets, among other indicators, can help to determine what financial means are necessary to live in dignity in a given country;

4. Acknowledges the fact that existing soft-law mechanisms such as the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and the social scoreboard established under the European Semester have contributed to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, but notes that they have proven insufficient; reiterates its call for a revision of the social scoreboard in the context of the European Semester in order to include indicators that fully reflect the trends in and causes of inequalities ⁽²⁵⁾; calls on the Member States to improve their implementation of the CSRs, in particular those relating to combating poverty and social exclusion, and urges the Commission to closely monitor their progress in this regard;

5. Welcomes the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe; highlights proposal 14, which calls for a common EU framework for MISs to ensure that nobody is left behind; highlights that the introduction of such a framework would contribute to the full implementation of the EPSR and the related action plan;

6. Acknowledges the Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion and calls on the Member States to swiftly adopt and implement it; is concerned about the fact that, pursuant to the original Commission proposal, the Member States would only have needed to report on their progress every three years and the Commission would not have carried out a stock-taking exercise until 2032; stresses that this timetable would not have been aligned with the commitments of the Porto Summit and the EPSR action plan; calls on the Member States to report to the Commission on their progress in implementing the recommendation every two years; calls on the Commission to monitor the progress in implementing the recommendation in the context of the European Semester, and to take stock of the action taken in response thereto, as referred to in paragraph 16(e) of the recommendation, by 2027 in order to evaluate its impact in reducing poverty and social exclusion, increasing employment levels and improving participation in training, as well as its contribution to achieving the 2030 targets, in particular the objective of reducing the number of people in the EU living in poverty or experiencing social exclusion by at least 15 million;

7. Calls on the Commission to support the Member States in implementing the Council Recommendation, including by enabling them to share best practice; underlines the importance of funding from the Employment and Social Innovation strand of the European Social Fund Plus for social protection and active inclusion to support the development of adequate social protection systems and labour market policies; stresses that minimum income support, as a tool to prevent and tackle poverty, must be part of a broader anti-poverty strategy that includes incentives to promote the reintegration into the labour market of those who can work;

⁽²⁵⁾ European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 on employment and social policies of the euro area 2021 (OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 33).

8. Notes that, as a follow-up to the Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion, an EU directive on adequate minimum income could contribute to the goal of reducing poverty by at least half in all Member States by 2030 and ensuring the integration of people absent from the labour market, while respecting the specificities of national social protection systems, the subsidiarity principle and the competences of the Member States; stresses that such a directive could help to further enhance the accessibility, adequacy and effectiveness of MISs, to promote upward social convergence; recalls that MISs should protect people lacking sufficient resources from experiencing poverty and social exclusion;

9. Calls on the Member States to regularly evaluate their MISs and update them if needed, in order to ensure that the level of support is adequate and reflects the national AROPE threshold or the monetary value of necessary goods and services and safeguards the purchasing power of beneficiaries, taking into account the cost of living; recalls that MISs should be set and adjusted through transparent processes based on robust methodology and involving relevant stakeholders; stresses that minimum income should not be seen merely as social welfare spending but rather as an investment in people and the economy, since beneficiaries are likely to spend it directly on daily needs;

10. Notes that household composition is one of the main aspects taken into account by many Member States when establishing the level of support provided; stresses that applying household-based means testing, which assumes that members of the household pool and distribute their resources equally, may create a cycle of dependence; insists that minimum income support should be granted after individual means testing, in order to ensure the protection and financial independence of each individual lacking sufficient resources and fulfilling the eligibility criteria; calls on the Member States to implement solutions facilitating the receipt of income support by individual members of the household; notes that a household-based approach often has a particularly negative effect on women's economic independence, which can result in gender-based economic violence and, among other things, limit women's chances of escaping gender-based violence and abuse; is concerned that age thresholds requiring claimants to be at least 18 years old may limit young adults' access to support and prevent them from becoming independent;

11. Considers that access to minimum income must be effective, equal and universal for people lacking sufficient resources and fulfilling the eligibility criteria set by the Member States, to allow them to live in dignity; recalls that minimum income should be part of broader income support schemes topped up or combined with in-kind benefits such as access to essential and enabling goods and services relating in particular to nutrition, childcare, education and training, health, housing, long-term care, transport, energy, digital communications and participation in sporting or sociocultural activities, in order to ensure the beneficiaries' social inclusion; stresses that income support must take into account the specific needs of individuals and intersecting inequalities, such as in relation to single parents, people with disabilities and dependent children; insists that assistance to cover disability-related expenses and active employment support are complementary to minimum income and one should not replace the other;

12. Is concerned that eligibility criteria that require a permanent address, a bank account or disproportionate periods of legal residency can restrict access to MISs and force disadvantaged groups into destitution, including non-nationals, Roma and people experiencing homelessness; calls on the Member States to ensure that their MISs provide full and effective coverage for people lacking sufficient resources and fulfilling the eligibility criteria, and to remove obstacles, in particular for disadvantaged groups;

13. Is concerned about the issue of low take-up levels for minimum income support in the Member States; calls on the Member States to raise awareness of MISs, the eligibility criteria and the related rights and obligations and to fight against stigmatisation; calls on the Member States to design simplified and comprehensible application procedures to access MISs, remove unnecessary administrative barriers and provide online and offline solutions, such as a single point of contact, personalised human guidance from designated case handlers, physical and digital appointments with public service providers, one-stop shops and technical support for applicants and beneficiaries; underlines that an effective way for social service providers and public administrations, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, to tackle the problem of low take-up is to proactively identify potential beneficiaries, notify them of their eligibility and then actively support them in submitting their application as well as throughout the process to ensure that benefits are granted smoothly;

14. Stresses that the digital divide needs to be considered when providing information on eligibility and designing and administering application procedures, and throughout the granting and duration of benefits; underlines the added value of assistance through online tools but stresses that digital tools alone will not overcome structural barriers such as a lack of

access to IT hardware or an internet connection or of digital skills; is worried about potential issues that the digital divide raises, especially for older people, people living in situations of homelessness, people living in remote areas and Roma people; recalls that the availability of physical appointments with public service providers remains vital to ensure proper service delivery for all people lacking sufficient resources;

15. Notes that informal care can lead to a loss of income, an aggravation of the gender pay and pension gaps, old-age poverty and the feminisation of poverty; insists that unpaid care work should be valued, carers' skills should be recognised and the equal distribution of care responsibilities should be encouraged, as highlighted in the European care strategy; strongly encourages the Member States to improve their social protection systems and public services, particularly for childcare and long-term care, so that people performing unpaid domestic work, the majority of whom are women, do not experience poverty and social exclusion and therefore are not forced to rely on social protection, including minimum income;

16. Considers, however, that MISs should not replace appropriate public care systems, and nor should they become a disincentive for women to re-enter the labour market and receive fair compensation for their work; points out that, if not properly designed, MISs may reinforce gender stereotypes and hinder women's participation in the labour market;

17. Stresses that MISs alone cannot lift people out of poverty; believes that it is essential for income support and minimum income not to contribute to social dependence and that they must rather be combined with incentives and supportive, enabling and active labour market measures to (re)integrate those who can work in order to break the vicious circle of poverty and the dependence on public support for individuals and their families; calls on the Member States to make MISs part of a proactive inclusion strategy that has people's social and labour market participation and well-being at its core; stresses the need for both general policies and targeted measures that empower those who are able to work to secure stable, high-quality and safe jobs, that provide effective, equal and universal access to social and public services for all, particularly in the fields of education, health and housing, and that include learning and employment opportunities provided by social economy actors such as work integration social enterprises;

18. Calls on the Member States to take measures that prevent beneficiaries from being forced to accept poor-quality jobs; is of the opinion that in-work poverty needs to be urgently tackled through decent wages in order to ensure that work pays and prevent the need to rely on MISs; acknowledges, however, that receiving a wage should not automatically make people ineligible for MISs if the salary does not provide enough to live in dignity, and that specific situations should be considered when determining access to minimum income;

19. Highlights that sustainable, high-quality employment is key to reducing poverty; stresses in this context the importance of boosting stable growth, investment and the creation of high-quality jobs; calls on the Member States to implement policy measures to (re)integrate those who can work into the labour market, including through ensuring that they provide sufficient incentives such as high-quality education, training, re- and upskilling opportunities, promoting formal employment and fighting undeclared work, as well as involving employers to enhance job retention and promotion; calls on the Member States to complement these measures with support services such as counselling, personalised coaching and job-search assistance, including special programmes for people not in education, employment or training, long-term unemployed people and low-skilled workers, as well as for the development of future-oriented skills with a view to the green and digital transitions; calls on the Member States to consider the combination of minimum income support with earnings from work as a progressive phase-out measure in order to support beneficiaries while they are (re-)entering the labour market so that they do not fall into in-work poverty; is concerned about the practice among some companies of only hiring minimum income beneficiaries for as long as public support is in place;

20. Stresses that inclusive societies must be fostered by combating social exclusion and discrimination while also promoting social justice, high-quality employment and improved living and working conditions, through social dialogue and by providing affordable and universally accessible social services such as healthcare and education, as well as strong social protection systems; calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen efforts to achieve upward social

and economic convergence, counter increasing inequalities within and between the Member States and increase solidarity; stresses that adequate minimum income support, unemployment benefits, minimum wages and pensions can contribute to these objectives; calls on the Commission, against this backdrop, to consider as a further EU measure, following the Council recommendation, a directive on adequate minimum income, in order to ensure the reintegration of people absent from the labour market, while respecting the subsidiarity principle, the specificities of national social protection systems and the competences of the Member States;

21. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to involve social partners and relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations, people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and/or their representatives, in the development and implementation of the Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 and national MISs, with a view to improving, and where necessary broadening, the coverage, take-up, accessibility and adequacy of social protection systems; calls in this context for adequate training for and an increase in the number of social workers and other social service providers in the Member States to enable them to work in optimal conditions and provide support and personalised assistance to those lacking sufficient resources;

22. Stresses the need for a strong and effective monitoring and evaluation system to be developed for MISs in the Member States, based on precise quantitative objectives and data as well as qualitative information, which should involve relevant stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, people at risk of or experiencing poverty and social exclusion and civil society organisations, so as to ensure a real impact on the ground; emphasises the importance of comprehensive national monitoring and reporting systems on MISs, which take account of other social protection mechanisms and social policy measures in the respective Member States; stresses, furthermore, the need to ensure sufficient coordination and information exchange between the competent authorities in the Member States, in particular those in charge of social protection and public employment services;

23. Stresses that beneficiaries of minimum income support who cannot work, cannot find work or are not part of the labour force must be given the opportunity to be included in and contribute to society through non-economic means, such as education, training and volunteering, civic participation, and social engagement on a voluntary basis;

24. Calls on the Member States, in order to ensure sustainable, decent and high-quality employment, to swiftly implement Directive (EU) 2022/2041 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union ⁽²⁶⁾, including by strengthening the role of collective bargaining and social dialogue, in close cooperation with the social partners, and taking appropriate measures to guarantee a just and fair wage for all, with a particular emphasis on women in order to close the gender pay gap;

25. Calls on the Commission to use the relevant EU programmes to support and monitor Member States' implementation of active labour market policies, including in the framework of the national recovery and resilience plans, in order to ensure and facilitate (re)integration into the labour market;

26. Stresses the importance of effective adjudication systems at all levels and calls on the Member States to ensure and facilitate access to justice for minimum income applicants and beneficiaries, so that the right to appeal is guaranteed and easily accessible to everyone;

27. Calls on the Commission to take measures aimed at sharing good practice between and among the Member States, particularly with regard to Roma, people living in poverty, women and other disadvantaged groups;

28. Calls on the Commission to provide the Member States with more flexible resources to help reduce the unemployment rate of young people living in the EU, disadvantaged groups such as Roma, people with disabilities and other excluded communities;

29. Emphasises the need to create opportunities, especially in disadvantaged areas, through incubators, apprenticeship programmes, workshops and other local job creation schemes to encourage the integration of participants and target groups into the labour market;

30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

⁽²⁶⁾ OJ L 275, 25.10.2022, p. 33.