



TRIPARTITE SOCIAL SUMMIT – 19 OCTOBER 2016

STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS

Europe is faced with unprecedented economic, social and political challenges. These challenges – insufficient competitiveness, lack of growth and employment, migration, security issues, and the need to redefine EU-UK relations - require European solutions.

European social partners strongly believe in the European Union. Populism, nationalism, xenophobia, anti-European sentiments, isolationism or protectionism can only create a downward spiral that will damage everyone. European and national commitment can and must go hand-in hand.

European employers and European Trade Unions regret but respect the decision of the United-Kingdom to leave the European Union. They are determined to contribute to finding solutions to mitigate the negative effects of this decision for companies and workers across Europe. Companies and workers must not pay the price for Brexit.

Our aim is to preserve as close economic relations between the European Union and the United-Kingdom as possible, while preserving the integrity of the Single Market, and fully respecting the four freedoms linked to it, i.e. free movement of goods, services, capital and persons.

European social partners also insist on the need to improve Europe's attractiveness as a place to invest and create jobs.

After a decade of under-investment, increasing efficient and productive private and public investment is essential for Europe's present and future growth and employment, particularly on fields like physical and social infrastructures, circular economy, digitalisation, innovation and research, education and training for better skills, etc. We therefore support the extension of the so-called Juncker Plan for Investment (European Fund for Strategic Investment – EFSI), drawing the necessary lessons from the first year of application on the need to improve additionality, facilitate cross-border projects and support countries experiencing difficulties in mobilising this instrument.

In parallel, EU and national efforts to remove obstacles to investment and job creation in Europe must be stepped up.

To reverse the relative decline of European industry including SMEs and given the importance of manufacturing and related services for growth and job creation in all sectors of the economy, we call on the European Commission to include an ambitious industrial policy strategy in the 2017 work programme.

Having efficient European institutions is essential to devise balanced and efficient European policies benefiting all Member States enterprises and workers. Europe needs transparent, democratically accountable and well-performing institutions: the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament have to be united and determined in working together to improve the capacity of the European Union to address enterprises' and workers' needs and expectations.

At the same time, a well-functioning social dialogue at EU, national, sectoral and company level is important to devise efficient policies that will increase European prosperity and ensure social fairness.

The statement on "a new start for social dialogue" co-signed in June by the Commission, the Council and the social partners is our common roadmap to design and implement policies for growth and job creation. We count on the European Commission and on the Council to live up to their commitment to implement it and support us through capacity building projects to further strengthen national social partnership for efficient social dialogue and industrial relations, where necessary.
