

**Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution  
on  
Developing a new EU anti-poverty strategy**

- 1. Rapporteur:** João OLIVEIRA (The Left - GUE/NGL / PT)
- 2. References:** 2025/2095(INI) / A10-0260/2025 / P10\_TA(2026)0049
- 3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 12 February 2026
- 4. Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)
- 5. Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The European Parliament resolution calls on the Commission to present an ambitious and adequately funded Anti-Poverty Strategy, which recognises poverty as a violation of human dignity, sets the goal of eradicating poverty by 2035, is comprehensive, people-centred and integrates a life-cycle approach, has non-discrimination as a horizontal principle and ensures proper coordination with Member States and the participation of persons with lived experience of poverty.

- 6. Response to requests and overview of actions taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

**Paragraphs 6, 17, 18, 33, 35, 59 and 60:** As announced in the 2026 Commission Work Programme, the Commission will put forward the EU's first-ever Anti-Poverty Strategy in Q2 2026. In accordance with President von der Leyen's 2025 State of the Union address, the Strategy will aim to "help eradicate poverty by 2050". The Commission takes note of the Parliament's calls to recognise poverty as a violation of human dignity, to take a comprehensive, people-centred and life-cycle approach to anti-poverty policies (including as regards monitoring) and to support proper coordination between all relevant stakeholders, including by supporting the participation of persons with lived experience of poverty. Discrimination and stigma were indeed underlined as important barriers in the fight against poverty in the context of the extensive consultation activities that informed the Commission's work on the upcoming Strategy.

**Paragraph 7:** The Anti-Poverty Strategy will have a gender dimension. Eliminating gender-based violence remains a priority for the Commission. The Commission will focus on the monitoring of the implementation of the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence. Member States have until 14 June 2027 to transpose the Directive. The Commission is supporting the transposition work of Member States by organising implementation workshops. The Commission will also continue to support an ambitious interpretation of the standards set by the Istanbul Convention by adopting recommendations and conclusions based on the reports of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO).

**Paragraphs 8, 14:** The Commission fully recognises the integral role that employment plays in poverty reduction and prevention efforts, as the shortest and most sustainable way out of poverty for those who are out of work and excluded from the labour market. The Commission has been working with Member States on the implementation and monitoring of several key instruments. The two [Council Recommendations on long-term unemployment](#) and the [reinforced Youth Guarantee](#) establish the EU policy flagships in these areas. Evidence on EU trends in long-term unemployment and youth unemployment over the last decade shows that these policy frameworks have proved effective and that the situation of long-term unemployed and young people have improved significantly during this period. Moreover, the [Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income for active inclusion](#) promotes a tailored and individualised approach to labour market integration and income support. The Commission will continue monitoring their implementation and supporting Member States in their implementation efforts. Strengthening active labour market policies in Member States remains one of the key priorities of the European Semester where many Member States are recommended to strengthen their capacity to provide labour market support for unemployed and vulnerable people. In this context, the Commission also recognises the importance of active labour market policies that are not limited to unemployed and inactive people but also include enabling services for people already in employment. Finally, the Commission is assisting Member States in facilitating employment access in the context of the European Network of Public Employment Services (PES). The PES Network's activities put a strong emphasis on support to those furthest from the labour market. The 2026 Work Programme of the Network will feature a dedicated Working Group on PES support to persons with disabilities as well as a survey-based report on the long-term unemployed (LTU). Under the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities the Commission developed the Disability Employment Package to improve the labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities.

**Paragraph 9:** As a follow-up to the [Quality Jobs Roadmap](#), the Commission will propose by the end of 2026 a Quality Jobs Act. In line with the Treaty, the Commission completed the first phase consultation of social partners to gather their views on the possible direction of Union action on a Quality Jobs Act, covering areas including Algorithmic Management and AI at work, health and safety, subcontracting, just transitions, and enforcement and the role of social dialogue. The second stage consultation is expected to be launched in April. The Quality Jobs Act is intended to complement and update the EU rules that ensure minimum level of protection in a targeted way. The initiative will take account of the diversity of national systems, allowing sufficient space for social partners' implementation and will limit to a minimum burden on companies. The [Union of Skills](#) is the EU's strategy to foster a more adaptable, competitive and resilient workforce in the face of rapid technological, economic and social changes. It includes actions such as the Individual Learning Account and the Skills Guarantee which can support people to gain the right skills to move into quality jobs and to progress in their careers. As regards Directive (EU) 2022/2041 on

adequate minimum wages, most Member States have already fully transposed it into their national systems; the few remaining Member States are in the process of adopting their national transposition measures. As foreseen in Article 10(3) of this Directive, the Commission will send its report to the European Parliament and the Council in the course of 2026, including its analysis of the data and information on minimum wage protection transmitted by all the Member States. It will also examine the action plans to promote collective bargaining established by Member States in which the collective bargaining coverage rate is below the 80% threshold.

**Paragraph 12:** Together with the OECD, the Commission is analysing effective policy measures within Member States for the promotion of underrepresented groups in entrepreneurship. The result of this analysis, covering women entrepreneurship, will be presented in the next edition of [“the Missing Entrepreneurs”](#). The social economy has a role to play in this regard. This is a topic covered in the [Social Economy Action Plan](#) - see more information under paragraph 15.

**Paragraph 13:** The Commission will continue to support Member States in promoting inclusive learning environments, in line with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the European Child Guarantee and the Strategy for the Rights of Disabilities 2021-2030. Within the [strategic framework of the European Education Area](#), the Commission will continue to support Member States to work towards shared priorities and agreed EU-level targets to ensure access to quality and inclusive education and training. It will do so by continuing to facilitate mutual learning and exchanges of best practices, supporting cooperation between Member States and education and training institutions, as well as through policy guidance and EU-level funding. The Commission is also committed to support Member States in preventing and fighting segregation through a combination of targeted and mainstream European policy frameworks, as well as legal and funding instruments<sup>1</sup>. The Commission will also, under the [Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030](#), support Member States to establish schools that can serve as examples of inclusive and innovative teaching and learning across the EU. It also urges Member States to ensure that their education systems at all levels comply with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), in order to advance supported learning in inclusive mainstream settings.

**Paragraph 15:** Support for the development of the social economy in the EU through innovative financing mechanisms has been a key priority of the Commission in recent years. In particular, the [InvestEU programme](#) launched in 2022 has strengthened support for social impact and social innovation, including instruments such as social impact bonds. Furthermore, targeted efforts to foster innovative financing have been delivered through the Employment and Social Innovation strand of the European Social Fund Plus ([ESF+](#)), notably via the Supply and Demand

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<sup>1</sup> Including the [European Education Area Strategic Framework](#) and within it the [Pathways to School Success Council Recommendation](#); the [EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation \(2020-2030\)](#) with its dedicated target on desegregation; EU-funding under e.g. cohesion funds and [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#); and legal instruments such as the [2000 Racial Equality Directive](#).

calls, which reached their fourth edition in 2023. These calls have supported the design and launch of new financial instruments, including specialised investment funds, social impact bonds, and blended finance initiatives. Furthermore, the mid-term review of the Social Economy Action Plan, which will be adopted in 2026, provides an opportunity to further strengthen the support for the social economy. Finally, the Council adopted in 2023 a Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions (C/2023/1344) which invites Member States, among other actions, to facilitate access to finance for social economy entities through innovative financing schemes. Member States are recommended to adopt or update their related social economy strategies by November 2025.

**Paragraphs 16, 19:** The European Semester encourages Member States to improve access to services. The comprehensive 2025 set of country-specific recommendations emphasises the need of enhancing access to integrated employment, social, health and long-term care services, including through modern, adequately funded systems. The recommendations also call for stronger coordination between active labour market policies and social services and ensure that essential services are available to everyone.

The Commission supports Member States' efforts to promote quality and affordable healthcare through projects aimed at systemic improvements of health systems. Those projects focus on systemic improvements in affordability<sup>2</sup>, fairer distribution of health benefits<sup>3</sup>, and access to healthcare for people with disabilities<sup>4</sup>. Results are now publicly available and as they provide guidance and evidence, Member States are welcome to leverage their potential in improving healthcare coverage and access to healthcare. Issues related to access to healthcare are also regularly addressed within the framework of the European Semester, where the Commission analyses national health systems, identifies challenges such as accessibility, effectiveness and resilience. Through Europe's Beating Cancer Plan the Commission supports Member States in improving equal access to cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment, as well as strengthening patients' quality of life. The European Cancer Inequalities Registry, a flagship initiative of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, helps identify disparities in cancer prevention and care. It examines socio-economic and lifestyle determinants of cancer, providing valuable data to guide investments and interventions at EU and national levels. Moreover, the '[Healthier together](#)' - EU non-communicable diseases initiative supports Member States in implementing actions on health promotion and disease prevention, with a focus on vulnerable and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. As these population groups

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<sup>2</sup> WHO (2025) [Can people afford to pay for health care? Evidence on financial protection in 40 countries in Europe](#)

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2025) The Role of Healthcare in Reducing Inequalities and Poverty in the EU: [https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/report-role-healthcare-reducing-inequalities-and-poverty-eu\\_en](https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/report-role-healthcare-reducing-inequalities-and-poverty-eu_en)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2025) Guidelines: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c2959f58-d63d-11f0-8da2-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

experience poorer health outcomes and limited access to preventive care, the [Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health](#) and the [Safe Hearts Plan](#) focus on these groups. In addition, the Safe Hearts Plan aims to address inequalities in cardiovascular health in a coordinated approach through the development of an EU cardiovascular health inequalities dashboard. As regards education, as a direct follow up to the Union of Skills and to the Action Plan on Basic Skills and in line with the European Education Area vision and its EU-level targets, in 2026 the Commission will adopt an Education Package which is expected to include four key initiatives: a Basic Skills Support Scheme, supporting effective interventions at school level to help children and young people attain an adequate level of basic skills by the end of compulsory schooling and to reduce early learning inequalities; an EU Teachers and Trainers Agenda with targeted measures to improve teachers working conditions; the first European School Alliances, to facilitate cross-border cooperation and mobility between schools across Europe; and the 2030 Roadmap on the future of digital education and skills to promote AI literacy, digital wellbeing and boost digital skills at all levels.

The European Commission monitors access to energy in Member States primarily through the governance framework of the EU Energy Union, which requires Member States to adopt National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) and submit regular progress reports on their actions and policies to achieve the 2030 climate and energy targets and fulfil the broader objectives of the Energy Union. Member States that consider having a significant number of people in energy poverty are also specifically required to report on their policies and targets on this issue. This process allows the Commission to compare national performance, identify risks to affordable energy access, and issue country-specific recommendations. NECPs as a governance tool will be reviewed for the post-2030 period as part of the forthcoming revision of the [Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action Regulation](#). Lack of access to affordable energy is also one dimension of energy poverty, which is an important work strand of the Commission. Through the energy poverty Recommendations and the work on Social Climate Plans, the Commission supports Member States in the design, implementation and monitoring of measures mitigating energy poverty. This topic is also covered by National Building Renovation Plans (NBRPs), where Member States need to outline measures and investments to transform residential and non-residential buildings into highly energy-efficient, decarbonised, and zero-emission buildings by 2050. The Commission also holds regular meetings and exchanges with Member States' experts through a Coordination Group on energy poverty and vulnerable consumers. Finally, through initiatives such as the [Energy Poverty Advisory Hub \(EPAH\)](#), it collects and analyses relevant indicators. The Commission is closely monitoring the evolution of different mechanisms to address transport poverty across EU Member States, especially in the context of preparations for National Social Climate Plans. In May 2025, the Commission adopted a [Recommendation on transport poverty](#). It encourages Member States to develop a strategic approach to combatting and preventing transport poverty and showcases measures to improve transport affordability, availability and accessibility. The [Transport Poverty Hub](#), launched

together with the Recommendation on transport poverty, supports Member States with an online platform showing transport service availability and accessibility, at a very fine geo-spatial resolution.

The Commission agrees that ensuring access to affordable, high-quality food is a key component of addressing poverty and promoting social inclusion. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) stabilises farmers' incomes and sustains continuous agricultural production across the EU, helping maintain food availability and reduce vulnerability to price fluctuations. In addition, through Objective 9 of the CAP, the EU aims to respond to societal demands for high-quality, safe, and nutritious food produced sustainably. Europe's farmers are the custodians of our lands and biodiversity and supporting them ensures that Europeans can access nutritious and affordable food. As outlined in the [EU Vision for Agriculture and Food](#), the Commission will hold every year a Food Dialogue with the food system's actors, including consumers, primary producers, industry, retailers, public authorities and civil society. This dialogue would be the forum to address food-related issues, including food affordability. The European Commission is therefore committed to promoting the exchange of best practices on food affordability and monitor the way food poverty is addressed in Member States using EU and national instruments, including social policies, school schemes and food stamps for the most vulnerable households. The European Commission has also commissioned a study on food affordability in the EU, to be finalised by end 2026, to assess the current situation and drivers affecting food affordability, as well as to assess the CAP's contribution to food prices and review other measures in place across the food system to support food affordability.

As regards work on alleviating the housing crisis: see response to paragraph 20 below.

Regarding access to water and sanitation the recast Drinking Water Directive (Directive (EU) 2020/2184) and the recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (Directive (EU) 2024/3019) stipulate Member State obligations on access to water and sanitation respectively. Clean and affordable water and sanitation for all is one of the three objectives of the [European Water Resilience Strategy](#), adopted by the Commission in 2025. The strategy includes actions to increase investments in water, in particular the adoption of the European Investment Bank Water Programme. The Commission is also regularly focusing on and addressing water and water investments in the context of the European Semester. In addition, following the assessment of the third river basin management plans under the [Water Framework Directive](#), the Commission is engaging in structured bilateral dialogues with Member States to accelerate the implementation of the EU water legislation, among others by identifying solutions to bridge the funding and financing gap.

For electronic communications, the universal service obligations in the European Electronic Communication Code (EECC, Directive 2018/1972) are the safety net to ensure that at least the minimum services are available to all end-users and at an affordable price to consumers, where a risk of social exclusion arising from the lack of such access prevents citizens from full social and economic participation in society. Member

States shall ensure that all consumers in their territory have access to adequate broadband internet access service and to voice communications services. The Commission has proposed a revision of the universal service rules in the [proposal for the Digital Networks Act](#) in January 2026.

In its [Culture Compass for Europe](#)<sup>5</sup>, adopted in November 2025, the Commission underlines the importance of cultural rights, cultural participation and access to cultural activities for everyone. It recognises that socio-economic status, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, or geographic location can be factors of exclusion. It includes actions to enhance citizens' access to culture across Europe, creating equal opportunities for all through sustained investment, and inclusive and accessible design of cultural infrastructure and programmes. In this spirit, in 2028, the Commission will prepare a report to support Member States in increasing the participation of and support to persons with disabilities in culture.

Protecting consumers in vulnerable situations is an important overarching priority of the [2030 Consumer Agenda](#). This encompasses safeguarding children in the digital environment and addressing the challenges posed by the rising cost of living, which has made affording essentials like food, energy, and housing increasingly difficult for many. One of the actions in the Agenda is to enhance the monitoring and analysis of consumer conditions and trends, including the cost of living. Additionally, the Agenda seeks to alleviate consumers' economic difficulties by supporting the circular economy and promoting the availability of affordable and appealing sustainable products.

**Paragraph 20:** The policy orientations and operational actions put forward in the [European Affordable Housing Plan](#) aim to bring affordable housing to all Europeans. The European Strategy for Housing Construction (COM(2025) 991 final), adopted by the Commission on 16 December 2025 together with the first-ever European Affordable Housing Plan is aimed at boosting the supply of affordable, quality and sustainable homes across the Union. Under the European Housing Alliance, the Commission is committed to engage with relevant public authorities at any level, private and social economy actors, civil society organisations, financial institutions and investors with a view to swiftly and extensively provide short term and systemic solutions to the current housing challenges. Reforms and investments are among the key channels to expand supply and increase access to affordable, sustainable and quality housing. The Affordable Housing Plan focuses notably on people in vulnerable and poverty situations facing risk of social and housing exclusion. The objective is to mobilise new investment in social housing and housing-led solutions for homeless people by establishing a dedicated workstream within the Pan-European Investment Platform, including potential cooperation initiatives with philanthropic organisations and private actors to expand financial and in-kind support. Moreover, the Commission has recently revised the [State aid rules on Services of General Economic Interest \(SGEI\)](#) to facilitate Member States' investment in affordable housing. The new SGEI Decision also clarifies

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<sup>5</sup> COM(2025) 785 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0785>).

the flexible conditions applying to social housing schemes. For instance, it clarifies that these schemes may cover a limited share of non-disadvantaged persons. In addition, the new rules acknowledge the importance of non-profit entities in the operation of housing SGEIs (for instance, they benefit from an exemption on overcompensation checks in certain circumstances). They also require that the housing remains in principle available as social or affordable housing for a minimum of 20 years, to prevent speculation and short-term resale for profit dynamics. A shorter duration can apply in specific, well-justified circumstances. Besides the SGEI rules, the Commission is also reviewing the [General Block Exemption Regulation](#) to increase support for energy-efficiency measures in social or affordable housing projects. For the programming period 2021-2027, the mid-term review of the Cohesion Policy provided the opportunity for Member States to amend their programmes. Targeted incentives and flexibilities were provided to further expand interventions supporting access to sustainable and affordable housing, including social housing. The interventions may include energy efficiency renovations aiming to alleviate energy poverty, construction, refurbishment and upgrade of social housing or access to non-segregated housing for vulnerable and marginalised groups as part of an integrated approach for their socioeconomic inclusion. The [New European Bauhaus](#) (NEB) also aims at funding and scaling up affordable solutions that can increase the efficient use of the built space, adopt bio-based solutions and innovative materials and techniques. It fosters transformations that boost preparedness to climate-related risks and natural disasters, as well as efficient mobility and energy production and consumption in the housing stock.

**Paragraphs 21, 22:** The Commission reiterates its commitment to stepping up coordinated action at Union level to prevent and combat homelessness. In this context, it recalls the establishment and support of the [European Platform on Combatting Homelessness](#), which brings together Member States, EU institutions, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders with the shared commitment of working towards ending homelessness by 2030. The Platform provides a multi-stakeholder governance framework to enhance cooperation and mutual learning, strengthen data collection and monitoring, optimise the use of funding and disseminate evidence-based practices to prevent and address homelessness across the Union. As announced in the European Affordable Housing Plan, the Commission will put forward a proposal for a Council Recommendation on fighting housing exclusion, together with the first ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy. The upcoming proposal for a Recommendation will aim to support Member States in developing comprehensive strategies to prevent and reduce homelessness and housing exclusion, as well provide adequate and sustainable support to people experiencing homelessness, through person-centred, integrated and housing-led approaches, including Housing First. The Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities underlines the importance of accessible and inclusive housing for the decent living of all persons with disabilities.

**Paragraph 23:** Since the [Pay transparency directive](#) was adopted in May 2023, the Commission has held four implementation workshops with

Member States to provide guidance and support for the correct transposition of the directive. The Commission will publish the report from the workshops in spring 2026. Member State must transpose the Directive by June 2026. The Commission will also organise a dedicated workshop with social partners in April 2026 to support them in the implementation of the directive. In March 2026, the Commission has finalised, together with the European Institute for Gender Equality, a step-by-step toolkit on gender-neutral job evaluation tailored to different sizes of employers. The toolkit contains dedicated tools on how to assess work of equal value tailored to different sizes of employers. Funding has already been made available for Member States through the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values [\(CERV\) programme](#) to support them in the development of further tools and in providing support to businesses.

**Paragraph 24:** The Commission will support Member States to close the gender pension gap by developing detailed comparative analysis of gender gaps in pensions and old-age poverty, and of the factors driving these gaps in the 2027 Report on Adequate Social Protection in Old Age, and by supporting mutual learning and exchange of best practices. Moreover, a set of European Semester country-specific recommendations issued in 2025 stress the need to ensure the adequacy of pensions, including by addressing income inequalities, while maintaining and improving the fiscal sustainability of the pension system. To achieve this, Member States are recommended to address income inequalities and increase the full-time labour market participation of women, while also promoting longer working lives and reducing incentives for early retirement.

**Paragraph 29:** The Commission agrees that menstrual poverty is a form of poverty that could hamper women and girls' participation in school and work which in turn can impact their career prospects and decrease the chance to break the cycle of poverty. The Commission will propose the exchange of good practice examples across Member States as a possible topic for one of the upcoming mutual learning seminars hosted by Member States.

**Paragraph 38:** The Commission agrees that Roma poverty, in particular child poverty, is a serious issue which needs to be addressed in order to implement the [EU Roma Strategic Framework 2021-2030](#). The last Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) survey of 2025 confirmed that the objective of reducing the poverty gap between Roma communities and the general population by at least half is still far from being reached. The Commission will continue to monitor the progress in the Member States and support the exchange of good practice. Member States are asked to report on implementation of their national Roma strategic frameworks every two years. Commission's periodic monitoring reports on this implementation are issued every two years. Next Commission report is due by the end of 2026.

**Paragraph 39:** Under the policy framework set by the [Digital Decade Policy Programme](#), and through the [Digital Europe Programme](#) funding, the Commission is fostering access to training on digital skills (basic and advanced), including for vulnerable groups and women. Similarly, the provision of digital education and skills for young people are addressed

by the [Digital Education Action Plan](#)<sup>6</sup> and funded through the Erasmus+ programme. The European Education Area has set a target to reduce underachievement in computer and information literacy to below 15% by 2030. Furthermore, the Commission funds Member States participation in the [International Computer and Information Literacy Study](#), which collects data on students' achievement, as well as teacher practices and access to digital infrastructure. The [Digital skills and Jobs Platform](#), available to all, serves as a central hub-for accessing learning opportunities. Each year, the European Digital Skills Awards reward projects that promote inclusion, digital literacy, and bridging digital divides. Furthermore, EU Code Week supports coding and computational thinking among young people, and Connecting Women in Digital brings together key stakeholders across Europe to increase women's participation in digital studies and careers. The online safety of children is a priority for the Commission. The EU continues to be at the forefront of safeguarding and empowering children and young people online, notably with a solid policy and legal framework which includes the [Better Internet for Kids strategy](#) (BIK+) with the support of the network of Safer Internet Centres in Member States which contributes to protect, empower and respect children online, with no child left behind; the [Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#) as regards media content standards; the [Digital Services Act](#), its enforcement and protection of minors guidelines, to protect rights online; the EU blueprint on age verification; the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act; and many other initiatives and proposals, including an upcoming EU-wide inquiry into the impact of social media on mental health and wellbeing of children and youth. The upcoming 2030 Roadmap on Digital Education and Skills will further align digital skills development, AI literacy, digital wellbeing and interoperable infrastructure into a coherent framework, ensuring that technology acts as an amplifier of quality and equity rather than deepening divides.

**Paragraph 40:** The Commission takes good note of the call to address the issue of digitalisation of public services in the upcoming Anti-Poverty Strategy.

**Paragraph 41:** The EU [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Act](#) requires that AI systems which are made available and used in the EU should be developed with a high level of protection of health, safety and fundamental rights. Following a risk-based approach, the AI Act prohibits certain AI systems used for social scoring recognising that such practices cause unacceptable risks. Further, the AI Act classifies as high-risk, among others, AI systems that are intended to be used by public authorities to evaluate the eligibility of natural persons for essential public assistance benefits and services, including healthcare services, as well as to grant, reduce, revoke or reclaim such benefits and services, as well as AI systems intended to be used to evaluate the creditworthiness of natural persons or establish their credit score (with the exception for the purpose of detecting fraud), and systems intended to be used for risk assessment and pricing in relation to natural persons in the case of life and health insurance. Such a classification means that the systems used

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<sup>6</sup> COM(2020) 624 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52020DC0624>).

in those fields need to meet the requirements set out in AI Act, in relation to data and data governance, documentation and recording keeping, transparency and provision of information to users, human oversight, robustness, accuracy and security, and others. Examples of this are the obligation for providers of high-risk AI systems to establish a risk management system with the view of identifying and mitigating risks to health, safety and fundamental rights, including the right to non-discrimination, as well as the obligation on data governance to also examine the data used for training AI models on possible biases and deploying other bias detection and mitigation measures to minimise risks to safety and fundamental rights.

**Paragraph 44:** The Commission acknowledges that people at risk of poverty and social exclusion are disproportionately impacted by climate change and welcomes the emphasis put on just transition. The EU poverty and social exclusion framework is holistic and multidimensional. The Commission is looking closely at specific dimensions of poverty in view of better understanding their root causes and tackling them, including to avoid regressive effects of climate and energy policies, in line with the Council Recommendation on ensuring a fair transition towards climate neutrality. In this context, the Commission Recommendation on Energy Poverty strengthens the energy efficiency first principle and reinforces measures to support vulnerable consumers. Furthermore, the Commission Recommendation on Transport Poverty and the Commission's Transport Poverty Hub help Member States address the complex challenges related to transport poverty and ensure Europeans have fair access to affordable and reliable transport and the opportunities it creates. The Just Transition Fund's (JTF) objective of mitigating the social, employment, economic, and environmental impacts of the transition towards a climate-neutral economy has been incorporated into the scope and specific objectives of the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP) Regulation. The objectives of the JTF will be addressed in a cross-cutting and comprehensive manner across the NRPP. Additionally, the Social Climate Fund (SCF) will continue to be implemented under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). It will support vulnerable people and small businesses who are most affected by rising energy and transport costs as Europe moves towards climate neutrality.

**Paragraphs 46, 48, 51, 52:** The Commission welcomes the emphasis put on the [Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee](#) – a key tool to enhance equal opportunities for children in need and break the inter-generational transmission of poverty rooted in the child rights approach. Since its adoption in 2021, reforms have been undertaken by Member States in areas such as early childhood education and care and the provision of healthy school meals. Yet gaps remain in the fight against child poverty. As part of the EU's Anti-Poverty Strategy, the European Child Guarantee will be strengthened in 2026 to bridge these gaps and shield children from poverty through investments and reforms, as announced in the 2026 Commission Work Programme. EU funding support will play a key role in this endeavour. In the Commission [proposal for the next MFF](#), the National Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP) envisaged a target of 14% spending on social objectives (excluding agriculture and fisheries and the Social Climate Fund). Annex

VI states that Member States must concentrate resources in their Plans on four key social objectives, including “(c) to implement the Child Guarantee through targeted actions and structural reforms to tackle child poverty particularly in Member States that have an average rate above the Union average of children of less than 18 years old at risk of poverty or social exclusion, based on Eurostat data, between the years 2024 and 2026.” The [Proposal for an European Social Fund \(ESF\) Regulation 2028-2034](#) also specifies in recital (15) that the ESF should ensure that everyone, including children in line with the Child Guarantee, have access to essential services of good quality. Recital (20) specifies that due to the particular need to support children in poverty, Member States should also programme resources of the ESF to address the measures under the Child Guarantee. However, reinforcing the European Child Guarantee cannot rest solely on the shoulders of EU funding. It must involve ways to empower Member States to intensify their efforts against child poverty, as they bear the principal responsibility for protecting their youngest citizens. Addressing child poverty is also promoted through the European Semester. The Employment Guidelines recommend Member States to reduce poverty and social exclusion, in particular of children, and invest in early childhood education and care, in line with the European Child Guarantee.

**Paragraph 56:** In line with the [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#) and the European Child Guarantee, the Commission encourages Member States to strengthen preventive measures, fostering access to social support for families, and providing safe and accessible alternatives to institutional care, notably through the implementation of the [Commission Recommendation on Integrated Child Protection Systems](#), which calls on Member States to promote deinstitutionalisation, including of children with disabilities, and ensure a transition towards quality family- and community-based care and services, always guided by the best interests of the child.

**Paragraph 58:** The Commission strongly condemns all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect against children and reiterates its commitment to safeguarding children’s rights, safety and well-being. It will continue to support Member States in strengthening integrated child protection systems, through the implementation of the Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems fostering, mutual learning and exchange of best practices notably through the EU Network for Children’s Rights. In line with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the Commission will promote prevention, early detection and coordinated responses across education, social and justice services. It will also support concrete actions through funding under the CERV programme, including the Daphne strand, to prevent and combat violence against children, particularly affecting the most vulnerable children, by enhancing child protection systems to effectively address and prevent violence against children across Member States. Furthermore, the Commission will advance actions to address bullying and cyberbullying, including through dedicated EU initiatives in the [Action Plan on Cyberbullying](#), encouraging the development and effective implementation of comprehensive national action plans in this area.

**Paragraph 64:** The [Better Regulation Toolbox, in application since 2015](#),

already incorporates a robust, horizontally applied step—namely, the identification of significant impacts through a structured series of leading questions. More specifically, Better Regulation Tool 18 – identification of impacts –, covers explicitly impacts on poverty and inequalities across relevant EU initiatives. Moreover, Better Regulation Tool 30 is dedicated to distributional impacts/income impacts, social protection and social inclusion. Finally, Tool 29 on Fundamental Rights explicitly refers to ‘people at risk of poverty or social exclusion’ in stating the area/scope of its application; and it also includes a non-discrimination and promoting equality checklist. This targeted approach ensures that only the most relevant and substantial issues are subjected to in-depth analysis, thereby optimising resources and maintaining a sharp, evidence-based focus. The reinforcement of this initial screening phase, ensures the preservation of the integrity of the assessment, avoiding superficial compliance while delivering meaningful, proportionate scrutiny. The upcoming Communication on Better Regulation in Q2 2026 will further emphasise this approach, ensuring that assessments remain rigorous yet efficient, without succumbing to procedural formalism.

**Paragraph 68:** In the 2021-2027 programming period - the alignment of the thematic enabling conditions with the respective investments under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) is ensured. Article 73 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, sets out the criteria to be respected for the selection of operations. Among other provisions, it requires for investments to be aligned with relevant strategies underlying the programme, including national strategic policy frameworks developed by Member States to comply with Thematic Enabling Conditions. This is the case for ERDF investments programmed under ERDF Specific Objective 4.3 ("promoting the socioeconomic inclusion of marginalised communities, low-income households and disadvantaged groups, including people with special needs, through integrated actions, including housing and social services") and the Thematic Enabling Condition 4.4 (National strategic policy framework for social inclusion and poverty reduction). In the Commission’s proposal for the MFF 2028-2034, strengthening social cohesion by supporting people and reinforcing the Union’s societies and the Union’s social model, including by fighting poverty and homelessness, is among the objectives that Member States will have to address in their NRPP. In the framework of sustainable urban development, Member States must support integrated development strategies paying special attention, amongst others, to housing and poverty. The future European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP) will contribute to the objectives linked to social inclusion and poverty reduction. Whilst there are no longer thematic concentrations expressed in percentage terms in the [ESF Proposal](#), the recitals of the ESF Regulation as well as Annex VI of [the Proposal for the NRPP Regulation](#) specify that, beyond the requirement to contribute to all 28 NRPP specific objectives, Member States shall concentrate resources on four types of social measures: social inclusion; food and/or basic material assistance; addressing child poverty and implementing the Child Guarantee combating youth unemployment, including through education and training; and implementing the Youth

Guarantee.