

**Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution
on the European Semester for economic policy coordination:
employment and social priorities for 2026**

- 1. Rapporteur:** Nela RIEHL (Greens / DE)
- 2. References:** 2025/2183(INI) / A10-0033/2026 / P10_TA(2026)0076
- 3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 11 March 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 resolution calls for the full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its action plan to be at the core of the European Semester. The report welcomes the permanent inclusion of the Social Convergence Framework in the European Semester, while calling on the Commission to improve and update its Social Scoreboard to track progress on upward social convergence, highlighting the need to treat in-work poverty as a warning signal within the scoreboard. The report stresses the importance of addressing the disability employment gap, ensuring affordable housing, and tackling poverty in relation to the European Semester.

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

Paragraph 1, 10, 26, 27:

The Commission acknowledges the European Parliament's emphasis on the competitive advantages of investing in Europe's social model and shares the view that strong social foundations are essential to sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The European Semester integrates these objectives and plays a key role in improving the coherence of EU and national economic, labour market and social policies around the objectives of competitiveness, sustainability and social fairness.

The Commission agrees with the importance of maintaining a balanced approach that reinforces social rights and supports high-quality public services, collective bargaining structures and coverage, while also strengthening Europe's competitiveness. It considers that the integration of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) into the economic governance framework is a key step in this direction. The priorities of the EPSR are also reflected in the country-specific recommendations (CSRs), which call on Member States to address labour market challenges, strengthen social services and healthcare and promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups. Delivering on the EPSR is a shared responsibility for the EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society.

Furthermore, the Commission remains committed to ensuring that the integrated governance framework is effectively reflected in its internal processes and will continue to foster close cooperation between economic, labour market and social policy actors. This ensures that relevant bodies contribute in a coherent and complementary manner, in line with their respective mandates. The coverage and adequacy of social protection in the Member States is one of the social challenges monitored in the framework of the European Semester, in particular in the Country Reports. Where relevant, this monitoring can lead to CSRs. The implementation of EU legislation is not directly monitored under the European Semester as such, where the focus is on the challenges themselves and actions taken or envisaged to address them. Actions planned by the Member States in areas where challenges are identified are monitored through various means, including through the Annual Progress Reports.

The Commission would like to thank the European Parliament for welcoming an EU Artists Charter. This has been announced in the [Communication 'A Culture Compass for Europe'](#), which also sets a timetable for each action. The adoption of the Charter is planned for the second quarter of 2027, which would allow sufficient time for a meaningful consultation of stakeholders in the process of elaborating the Charter.

Gender equality challenges in the Member States, in particular in their labour market, education and skills, social protection and social inclusion, and healthcare and long-term care dimensions, will continue to be monitored under the European Semester. This was reaffirmed in the [Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030](#) presented by the Commission in March 2026.

Through the Social Scoreboard, the European Semester monitors the implementation of principles 2 (gender equality) and 3 (equal opportunities) of the EPSR. Moreover, the Country Reports adopted annually as part of the European Semester Spring Package contribute to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including on gender equality (SDG 5), and the way in which economic and employment policies can help deliver on them.

The reformed EU economic governance framework that entered into force in 2024 provides for a more integrated approach to policy coordination and surveillance across fiscal, macroeconomic, employment and social policies. The reformed framework provides Member States with more flexibility for public investment, including through the possibility of extending the fiscal adjustment period for Member States that commit to specific investments and reforms that comply with a set of criteria. In their medium-term fiscal-structural plans, Member States are required to set out priority reform and investment commitments guided by common EU priorities, including the implementation of the EPSR.

To ensure ownership of the European Semester among Member States and stakeholders, including social partners, the Commission consults

stakeholders on a regular basis throughout the Semester process. Social partners are consulted at all key moments in the Semester cycle, i.e.,

- a) during annual Semester fact-finding missions in the Member States,
- b) ahead of the Semester Autumn Package on the strategic priorities for the next Semester cycle in the employment and social domains, and
- c) ahead of the Semester Spring Package, on the national employment and social situation of those Member States that are undergoing a deeper analysis under the Social Convergence Framework.

The Commission also regularly engages with and consults civil society organisations (CSOs) in the European Semester process, including by hosting annual exchanges of views with the EU-level and national level CSOs. During the European Semester fact-finding missions in the Member States, the Commission invites relevant national stakeholders to provide their views and engage in discussions. In addition, the Commission engages in structural exchanges with the European Economic and Social Committee, where social partners and civil society organisations are represented.

To further improve ownership at national level, the Commission regularly invites the Member States to follow up on the 2023 Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union. This is to ensure that national social partners are involved in a systematic, meaningful and timely manner in the design and implementation of employment and social policies and, where relevant, economic and other public policies, including in the context of the European Semester. The Commission emphasises the importance of social dialogue on a structural basis, including in the 2025 Employment Guidelines and in the 2025 Euro Area recommendation, as well as in bilateral discussions with Member States and in the context of multilateral surveillance. The Commission also supports the Employment Committee of the Council in monitoring the above-mentioned 2023 Council Recommendation.

The Commission takes note of the European Parliament's concerns regarding transparency, accountability and the implementation of CSRs and recalls that the formulation of CSRs within the European Semester is based on a robust and well-established framework. The recommendations that the Commission proposes every year are based on qualitative and quantitative analysis in the Country Reports of developments in the Member States. The fact-finding missions, which include the discussions with stakeholders, including social partners, as well as other input provided by many actors involved, play an important role in this regard.

To further enhance transparency and ownership with the Member States, the Commission discusses policy progress and emerging challenges identified in the Country Reports with Member States at various stages of the process. In addition, following the Commission's

proposals, Member States hold in-depth discussions on the CSRs during committee meetings, preparing for the adoption by the Council. Towards the European Parliament, the Commission maintains close cooperation and ongoing dialogue by participating in plenary sessions and committee meetings, as well as responding to ad hoc requests. The Commission remains committed to further enhancing transparency, and underlines that the preparation of recommendations involves close cooperation across relevant Commission services and is conducted in line with robust internal procedures to ensure the quality and adequate underpinning of the proposals.

Regarding the implementation of CSRs, the Commission emphasises that effective implementation requires long-term action. The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), Cohesion Policy funds and the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) have played a key role in advancing implementation and supporting labour market and social reforms. The Commission has consistently emphasised the importance of CSRs and supported Member States in addressing them, including in the areas of employment and social policies, through strengthened dialogue, technical support and closer monitoring. The reform of the economic governance framework further enhanced this as Member States are encouraged to design reforms and investments that directly address the challenges identified in their respective CSRs. The Commission regularly assesses the implementation of CSRs through various tools in the context of the European Semester, including the multilateral surveillance and the related peer reviews in the advisory committees to the Council. Furthermore, the implementation of the Employment Guidelines is monitored on an annual basis through the Joint Employment Report, which is discussed with Member States and adopted by the Council.

Paragraph 2, 3, 12, 13, 14:

The Commission is fully committed to further deepening the implementation of the EPSR, and to supporting Member States and other actors to achieve its full implementation. The EPSR remains the EU's compass on employment and social policies, especially in the context of new and emerging challenges, ensuring that social considerations are mainstreamed throughout Commission initiatives. The full and effective implementation and enforcement of the [2021 Action Plan](#) remain imperative, also in view of reaching the three EU headline targets on employment, skills and poverty reduction. In 2025, the Commission carried out a public consultation which confirmed the importance and relevance of the EPSR. Future actions to implement the EPSR will be based on a thorough analysis of progress made and implementation gaps, as well as possible new needs. New actions should complement and strengthen ongoing and planned initiatives, contributing to supporting the EU's competitiveness, resilience and preparedness at societal level.

The Joint Employment Report (JER) monitors the implementation of

Employment Guidelines “Boosting the demand for labour”, “Enhancing labour supply and improving access to employment, lifelong acquisition of skills and competences”, “Enhancing the functioning of labour markets and the effectiveness of social dialogue” as well as “Promoting equal opportunities for all, fostering social inclusion and fighting poverty”. Since its 2018 edition, the JER has a strong, sustained focus on the EPSR, supported by its main analytical framework, the Social Scoreboard. With the 2021 Pillar Action Plan, the Commission published, and the Council endorsed, a revised Social Scoreboard, that includes 17 indicators, covering all but two EPSR principles. The JER relies on the Social Scoreboard for its monitoring. From the 2024 JER edition on, this has been reinforced with the inclusion of the first-stage analysis of the Social Convergence Framework (SCF) that identifies Member States for a deeper second-stage analysis. Other Semester documents (notably the SCF second-stage analysis and Country Reports) complete the analysis on a fully country-specific basis.

The EPSR Action Plan has further strengthened the role of the European Semester as a key tool for monitoring and implementing the EPSR. It has allowed to better track progress by Member States, notably on key policy dimensions such as adult learning, the labour market integration of persons with disabilities, the risk of poverty or social exclusion of children, and housing. The full set of headline indicators of the Scoreboard, agreed with the Council, along with those included in the Joint Assessment Framework, are analysed in Semester documents, together with available breakdowns (by sex, age, migration background, region etc.) as needed. Supported by recent improvements in the timeliness of statistical data (notably of social indicators), this allows for a better understanding of Member States’ progress, including towards the 2030 targets on employment, skills and poverty reduction. The Commission will continue to further strengthen its monitoring tools used within the Semester. This includes the work on a monitoring framework for job quality, conducted within the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) advisory committees.

To increase employment of persons with disabilities, the Commission has developed the [Disability Employment Package](#) – a set of guidance for employers, employers’ associations, public authorities and persons with disabilities. The Package presents the policy and legal frameworks, and explains the obligations and roles of employers, illustrated with model examples. The Package focuses on all stages of employment, from recruitment, through retention, to coming back to work. The objective of the Package is to support the Member States in increasing employment of persons with disabilities through explaining practical steps on recruitment and employment processes. The Package also aims at countering the myths about employees with disabilities as well as the cost of reasonable accommodation. To help implement the Package guidelines and learn from each other, the Commission has launched a transnational call for projects. Additionally, the Commission is currently organising learning events in the Member States. The analysis in the context of the European Semester has been ongoing and respective observations and recommendations are made. The Commission, together with key stakeholders will continue its work, including on the

additional guidance of the Package. Moreover, in the context of the European Semester the Commission has addressed policy recommendations to Member States for instance to improve access to quality essential and enabling services for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. The Country Reports identify key social challenges that include for some Member States the process of deinstitutionalisation of persons with disabilities and children in alternative care. In the 2026 Semester cycle, the Commission is strengthening the analysis concerning the affordability and accessibility of (social) housing, including as a key pillar in the process of deinstitutionalisation.

The Social Convergence Framework (SCF) is implemented in line with Regulation (EU) 2024/1263, based on which the surveillance of the Commission in the European Semester includes a framework to identify risks to social convergence. Through the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee, the Commission is in regular contact with Member States regarding the implementation of the SCF.

Paragraph 8:

Quality traineeships are a priority for the Commission. [The Traineeships package](#), proposed by the Commission in 2024, consisting of a proposal for a Directive and a proposal to reinforce the 2014 Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships, aims to improve and enforce the working conditions for trainees, including pay, as well as the inclusiveness and the quality of traineeships. The Directive also aims to combat regular employment relationships disguised as traineeships. The Commission will continue its support to the co-legislators in the ongoing negotiations on the Directive as an honest broker. As for the reinforced Council Recommendation, which includes also a principle on fair pay, the Commission has proposed to monitor its implementation in cooperation with the Member States and with the support of the Employment Committee, building on the existing monitoring instruments used in the framework of the European Semester.

Paragraph 16, 17:

A social investment approach is at the core of the EPSR and the Commission initiatives to implement its principles and rights in the field of skills, as demonstrated for instance by the new Human Capital Recommendation (C/2026/1687) as part of the 2025 Semester Autumn Package. In the area of social protection and inclusion, this approach is demonstrated for instance by the Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 establishing a European Child Guarantee or the Council Recommendation (2023/C41/01) on Minimum income ensuring active inclusion. Prior to the EPSR, this was already affirmed with the [2013 Commission Social Investment Package](#). Such approach is applied

throughout the Semester work, in particular by monitoring and recommending the implementation of relevant measures by the Member States, in the labour market, skills and social domains.

On social indicators, the Commission is working closely with Member States to improve the timeliness, availability and use of data. In particular, through the Indicator Sub-Group of the Social Protection Committee, efforts are ongoing to strengthen monitoring frameworks and develop more timely indicators. This includes cooperation with Eurostat on the development of flash estimates to allow earlier assessment of poverty and inequality trends. The Commission also closely monitors progress towards the 2030 headline target on poverty and social exclusion. The Commission also encourages the use of distributional impact assessments, notably building on the 2022 Communication on distributional impact assessments and through dedicated mutual learning activities with Member States.

The Commission promotes the use of evidence-based policymaking for social investment also through the Social Investment Knowledge Hub, which supports mutual learning, analytical capacity and access to data.

The Commission recognises the foundational role of social investment in competitiveness and cohesion. The Social Investment and Skills window of InvestEU has to date committed EUR 1.8 billion of guarantees backed by the EU budget to mobilise private investments in key areas such as microfinance, skills, the social economy and social infrastructure. Total investment expected to be mobilised over the current programming period exceeds EUR 15 billion, adding to Member States' action under the RRF and through financial instruments and grants under the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In parallel, the Commission continues to act as a market builder through the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme and InvestEU advisory, piloting innovative financial schemes to further attract investment into projects with social objectives, improving impact measurement, data availability, ecosystem collaboration, capacity building and technical assistance. Following the adoption of the [Mid-term Review of the Social Economy Action Plan](#), the Commission intends to further strengthen the social investment framework by exploring a voluntary, market-led approach in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions adopted in 2023 (C/2023/1344) provides a common framework for Member States to integrate the social economy into their policies and create a conducive environment for social economy organisations by facilitating access to finance, providing capacity building opportunities and ensuring visibility. Together with the 2021 Social Economy Action Plan, the Council Recommendation created a political momentum for social economy, increased its recognition and accelerated national actions. In line with the Recommendation, most Member States have adopted or are preparing national or regional strategies for the social economy. Moreover, half of the Member States

have adopted or are in the process of adopting legal acts for the social economy. The EU level financial support has increased in the 2021-2027 period. Under the cohesion policy, the Member States have planned to allocate EUR 1.4 billion in EU amounts under the ESF+, the ERDF (including Interreg) and the Just Transition Fund to the development of social economy entities and ecosystems. Around EUR 1.2 billion in guarantees have been allocated under the Social Investment and Skills window of InvestEU for microfinance, social entrepreneurship and social impact investing. In addition, the EaSI strand of the ESF+ has supported the development of social finance markets and several Horizon Europe calls have addressed social economy and social enterprises. Following the adoption of the Social Economy Action Plan mid-term review, the Commission intends to build on the renewed momentum for the social economy and work closely with the Member States, including in the context of the European Semester. The Commission will launch the monitoring process of the implementation of the Recommendation in 2027.

Paragraph 20, 21:

As announced in the [2025 Union of Skills Communication](#), the Commission is preparing a new EU Vocational education and training (VET) Strategy to enhance the quality, labour market relevance and attractiveness of VET systems across Member States. This initiative will help reinforce the contribution of VET to addressing skills shortages, as well as the green and digital transitions. In 2026, the Commission will also present a Skills Portability Initiative as part of a broader Fair Labour Mobility Package, also as foreseen in the Union of Skills Communication. The Skills Portability Initiative will consist of three distinct but interrelated actions to address barriers to the mobility of workers, including in unregulated professions to further modernise and facilitate recognition processes for regulated professions, in particular by leveraging digital tools and to simplify rules and procedures for handling the recognition and validation of qualifications and skills of third country nationals. Individual learning accounts, as called for by the Union of Skills, can motivate individuals to reskill and upskill in order to keep up with the changing labour market needs, including in acquiring the skills needed for the just transition. The Commission is supporting the implementation of individual learning accounts through a dedicated mutual learning programme, involving 17 Member States. Besides further supporting existing reskilling and upskilling initiatives at the end of 2025, the Commission has launched the Skills Guarantee proposed in the Union of Skills. By supporting workers and businesses, it aims to tackle labour and skills shortages in strategic and growing sectors capitalising on people's skills. As a first step, the Commission has launched [a Skills Guarantee Pilot](#), which focuses on workers from the automotive industry and its supply chain who are at risk of unemployment.

The Commission also launched the [Pact for Skills](#), as part of the [European Skills Agenda](#), which has brought together over 4 000

members - ranging from SMEs to multinationals - in collective upskilling and reskilling efforts. Participants have committed to training 25 million workers by 2030, supported by 20 Large-Scale Skills Partnerships in strategic sectors, including automotive, aerospace, digital, and green technology. Additionally, 22 regional partnerships ensure locally adapted solutions, reinforcing the Pact's position as an effective, industry-driven framework. As announced by the Union of Skills, the Pact for Skills has been streamlined to include the [European Alliance for Apprenticeships](#). It also features expanded pledges, enabling companies to commit not only to upskilling but also to apprenticeships, lifelong learning, and new training programmes. In addition, it includes an enhanced toolbox, incorporating initiatives such as [Blueprint Alliances for Sectoral Innovation](#), [Centres of Vocational Excellence](#), and the [EU Skills Academies](#).

Moreover, the [Talent Booster Mechanism](#) has been operating since 2023. It is the Commission's policy response based on eight pillars to harness talent in EU's regions. The Commission's proposal for the future National and Regional Partnership Plans identifies the right to stay as a key enabler to achieve the Fund's specific objective of supporting sustainable prosperity across all EU regions.

Paragraph 22:

The adoption of the [Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness](#) on 5 March 2026 reflects the Commission's commitment to embedding intergenerational fairness across its policymaking and represents another step towards ensuring that policies consider the needs of future generations.

Intergenerational fairness is already reflected in the European Semester which provides the framework for the coordination of economic and social policies in the Union. By promoting reforms that are both adequate and sustainable over the long term, the Semester contributes to safeguarding the interests of younger generations through forward-looking investment, while ensuring fiscal sustainability. As part of its flagship actions, [the Strategy](#) foresees the development of an intergenerational fairness index, which could cover a broad range of indicators, including some of those referred to in the Resolution

The adequacy of social protection in old age, notably pensions and long-term care, is well reflected in the Semester framework, and underpinned by comparable analytical indicators in the Country Reports. In 2025, 11 Member States received CSRs on pensions, among which six specifically focused on pension adequacy or old-age poverty, and 15 Member States received CSRs on various dimensions of long-term care. The indicator-based [framework for monitoring the implementation of the Council Recommendation on access to affordable high-quality long-term care](#), adopted by the Social Protection Committee in 2025, has enhanced the robustness of the long-term care analysis in the European Semester. The Commission will report in 2027 on the

adequacy of social protection in old age, together with the Social Protection Committee, and on the implementation of the [2022 Council Recommendation on long-term care](#).