



socialplatform

Brussels, 7 December 2017

## JOINT STATEMENT

### RE: Call to support swift progress on Work-Life Balance Directive at EPSCO Council

On 26 April 2017, the European Commission proposed a Directive to “support work-life balance for parents and carers”, a topic that will be on the agenda of the upcoming EPSCO Council of 7 December 2017. The Estonian Presidency has started the discussion, but is it of the **utmost importance that the file progresses without being watered down and without any barriers slowing down its approval.**

We are 10 civil society networks and organisations representing millions of children, young people, adults and families across the EU. We have been calling for such an initiative for a number of years and we welcome the proposal because we strongly believe it could have a real impact.

The existing legal and institutional leave framework fails to sufficiently address problems faced by parents and carers on a daily basis, and does not provide adequate solutions for the needs of modern societies (i.e. an ageing population, the gender pay and pension gap, and equality in the labour market).

The proposal for a Directive on Work-Life Balance is the right way forward and it must now be swiftly approved and followed up with enforcement and monitoring. Some of the measures included are particularly helpful, such as the introduction of paid paternity leave of ten days, paid carers’ leave, non-transferable paid parental leave (at sick leave level), and the right to request flexible working conditions. These will bring real changes to the lives of many Europeans.

Many people in Europe are becoming disengaged from the European project, feeling they have lost in the race of globalisation and seeking responses to anti-European sentiments. This is a consequence of the fact that in recent years the EU has forgotten its human face, and its ambition to go beyond financial and economic integration to build a real Social Europe. We welcome the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and delivering the Work-Life Balance Directive will be a first concrete example of how good intentions can become reality.

We are aware that this may require some investment and adjustments to national laws and policies, and we remain at your full disposal for a more detailed discussion on any specific point.

## **Note to the editor**

### **About AGE Platform Europe:**



AGE is a European network of organisations of and for people aged 50+ aiming to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. [www.age-platform.eu](http://www.age-platform.eu)

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*AGE policy work is co-funded by the **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme** of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of AGE Platform Europe and ENNHRI and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.*