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**TAMÁS MESZERICCS**

**European Pillar of Social Rights EP own initiative report  
December 8, 2016**

Attempts to tackle the continued and ongoing economic, financial and social crises of 2008 have severely wounded EU member states and their population. Competitiveness and fiscal consolidation has played the main role until nowadays, while the particular importance of the public safety net has been neglected and therefore economic, financial and budgetary interventions significantly decreased the well-being of society. In March 2016 the Commission submitted the proposal of the European Pillar of Social Rights, what finally intends to consider the other side of the coin. The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker in his 2015 State of the Union speech has already named the strengthening of social rights as one of the Commission's main priorities, also targeted by the initiative. The project is currently in the consultation phase until the end of December which will be followed by the Commission's summary and first initiatives. In the meanwhile, the European Parliament prepares its own-initiative report on the subject in order to enable the Commission to implement the Parliament's opinion into its first conclusion. The Parliament will decide on the text scheduled to the beginning of January 2017 in a plenary session held from 16th to 19th of January 2017.

Even though the draft report contains numerous elements already mentioned in previous treaties and reports, this time the goal is to create a more powerful and vigorous document under the leading of Maria João Rodrigues as rapporteur. Tamás Meszerics co-operates in the process as a shadow-rapporteur with his six colleagues.

The draft report aims to tackle the new challenges in the social sector and European labour market. Such as providing fair and quality working conditions for all workers

(including new forms of employment); creating adequate social protection and even level playing field; the promotion of equal opportunities; and encouraging mobility.

The major proposals of Mr Meszerics on behalf of the Greens/EFA are concrete and specific recommendations in order to reach these goals. Therefore he calls for EU-level harmonization of minimum wages; elaborating a European calculation on regional bases with a common methodology to create the best reference number for minimum wages and minimum income regulations. The proposal for a new minimum income directive calls for common principles, definitions and methodology, while the proposal for the harmonization of unemployment benefits aims to forbid the possibility for defining the length of providing unemployment benefits shorter than the average job seeking time.

In addition, Tamás proposes to regulate employment mediated by digital platforms; the regulation of the legal status of internships in terms of salary, working hours and labour rights and to ban cut offs of energy poor households from energy providers. Proposals for resources and actions regarding the building of the social housing sector, for banning the criminalization of poverty (especially in case of homelessness) and urging the Council to adopt the women on boards directive are also among Tamás's top priorities.

It is clear that the draft report contains particularly ambitious proposals indispensable for a more equal Europe. Efforts continue around the clock to create a benchmark, bearing in mind the goal all along the road.