
Social Summit: von der Leyen (EU Commission), “turning the principles of the Social Pillar into tangible positive change”

“Opportunities and protection”: this is what Europeans need today. And this is what the European model of the social market economy, the “promise that our parents built for us”, continues to offer, even if “our world is transforming”. In her remarks at the Summit in Porto, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen quoted from The Leopard (“For things to remain the same, everything must change”), exhorting to “build a social Europe that is fit for our day”, one that “is delivering on its ambitions”. Indeed, despite the European model is a good model, the pandemic has highlighted some paradoxes, von der Leyen continued. For example, essential workers, on whom “our daily life depends” and whose contribution is “priceless”, “do not enjoy the same rights and the same social security as others”. The same goes for women and young people who “were the first to lose their jobs” during the pandemic. If the principles of the Social Pillar were set out in Gothenburg in 2017, now the Porto Summit must turn them into “tangible positive change” based on clear and measurable targets. The president indicated three objectives to be achieved by 2030: 78% of adults employed, 60% of workers in continuous training, and lifting 50 million adults and 5 million children out of poverty. The Commission has already put forward some proposals: a youth guarantee, a child guarantee, a directive on pay transparency and a pact for skills. Resources are available under the European Marshall Plan “NextGenerationEU”.

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