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European Parliament – Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)

Brussels (Belgium), 14.07.2021



Meeting of 14 July 2021 - Exchange of views with Janez Cigler Kralj (Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)

The Minister started with giving a presentation on the Slovenian Presidency's programme on employment and social affairs, after which the MEPs, Members of the EMPL Committee, were given the opportunity to ask questions and the Minister answered them.

The Slovenian presidency wants to make a contribution to building a stronger Europe in the period following the pandemic, a Europe that will be more resilient and better prepared for answering challenges in the social as well as the digital field.

The Minister made several references to the need for maintaining good relations with the Western Balkans. In order to achieve a resilient and inclusive labour market, we need a secure Union and this is also true for the Union's neighbourhood.



Topics that the country of Slovenia wants to focus on during its six months' presidency of the Council until the end of 2021 are: further implementation of the European pillar of social rights, continue negotiations on the coordination of social security systems, ensure adequate workers' remuneration, establishment of a minimum wage framework, ensure quality work for a workforce that is well-skilled through life-long learning,...

The social partners play an essential role in achieving these goals. The creation of a healthy working environment is an essential condition for achieving quality work. New flexible working schemes such as teleworking create new opportunities but also new challenges. The right to digitally disconnect has to be acknowledged. Quality ageing goes together with investing in the human capital in all stages of life.

All tools are available in the Union to achieve welfare for its citizens.

During the questions' round, the floor was given to Members of Parliament who asked for the Minister's point of view on more issues such as the situation of platform workers, self-employment and workers' participation in the digital age, the situation of disabled workers, discrimination of minorities, fight against poverty, the situation of mobile workers, healthcare workers, ...



Furthermore, demographic challenges were identified as one of the Union's major challenges. Environmental and social issues have to be given the same significance as economic issues in the European semester. It is time for the Commission to act now and work on achieving better protection for workers in the digital sector.

The Minister thanked the Members of Parliament for their involvement and underlined that we are living in demanding times and are facing difficult challenges. The coordination of social security systems is a complex matter and the situation needs to be de-blocked. The Union is built on compromises and we have to find solutions that are politically acceptable to everyone.

The demographic transition is as important as the digital and the green transition.

It is inadmissible that men and women are paid differently for doing the same work.

Social indicators need to be included in the European semester. The presidency wants to cooperate with the European Commission and the European Parliament to achieve visible progress in the social field.