

**THE EUROPEAN PILAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS: AN OPPORTUNITY TO
FOSTER THE EU**

**EL PILAR EUROPEO DE DERECHOS SOCIALES: UNA OPORTUNIDAD
PARA IMPULSAR LA UNIÓN EUROPEA**

David RODRÍGUEZ GUILLÉN
Asesor en el Parlamento Europeo

Juan Antonio CLEMENTE SOLER
Universidad de Murcia

Resumen: La globalización y la crisis económica han transformado las estructuras sociales de las sociedades occidentales. Se ha incrementado notablemente la exclusión social, especialmente en los países del sur de la Unión Europea. En este sentido, aunque la palabra social está dentro de los tratados europeos, en la práctica, el pilar social todavía no ha sido completado a nivel europeo. El Acta Única Europea, la Carta Europea de los Derechos Sociales para los Trabajadores, varias comunicaciones y algunas directivas han intentado desarrollar el pilar social que, pese a todo, sigue incompleto. La crisis económica ha vuelto a traer este asunto a la agenda política, sobre todo tras las declaraciones del presidente Juncker sobre el Pilar Europeo de Derechos Sociales en 2015, 2016, 2017 y 2018 y la firma del Pilar Europeo de Derechos Sociales en Goteburgo, Suecia el pasado mes de noviembre de 2017. La nueva presidenta de la Comisión Europea Ursula Von der Leyen ha mostrado un gran compromiso con el Pilar Europeo de Derechos Sociales y, en su agenda por Europa, ha propuesto acciones ambiciosas en esta área a lo largo de sus primeros 100 días de mandato. Ahora, la Unión Europea tiene una gran oportunidad para impulsar el pilar social en este período legislativo.

Palabras clave: Globalización, Pilar Social Unión Europea, política social, Euroescepticismo

Summary: The globalisation and the economic crisis have transformed the social structures in western societies. There has been an important increase of social exclusion, especially in the countries of the south of the European Union. In this regard, even if the word social is enshrined in the European Treaties, in the practice, the social pillar has not yet been fully achieved at the EU level. The Single European Act, the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights for Workers, several communications and some directives attempted to develop the social pillar which remained incomplete. The economic crisis has raised this issue on the agenda, especially after the declarations of President Juncker concerning the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 and the signature of this Pillar in Gothenburg, Sweden last November 2017. Now the EU has a very good opportunity to boost the social pillar after the new European elections in this new legislative term. New president of European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen has also showed a big compromise on Europe's social pillar, and, on her agenda for Europe, she has proposed ambitious actions over the first 100 days of her mandate in this area. Now the EU has a very good opportunity to boost the social pillar in this legislative term.

Key words: Globalisation, European pillar of social rights, social policy, Euroscepticism

Sumario: 1. INTRODUCTION. 2. SOCIAL EXCLUSION, PROFILES AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICIES TO FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION. 4. THE CRISIS OF THE SOCIAL MODEL IN COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN EUROPE. 4. THE CRISIS OF THE SOCIAL MODEL IN COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN EUROPE. 5. THE SOCIAL POLICY IN THE EU TREATIES. 6. THE REAL SOCIAL POLICY AT THE EU LEVEL. 7. THE ATTEMPTS TO BOOST THE SOCIAL PILLAR. 8. THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE STATE OF THE UNION DEBATE: FACING AN OPPORTUNITY TO BOOST THE SOCIAL PILLAR AND THE SIGNATURE OF THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS. 9. BOOSTING THE SOCIAL PILLAR IN THE NEW LEGISLATIVE TERM AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MORE EUROPE. 10. CONCLUSION. 11. REFERENCES.

1. INTRODUCTION

In our day and age, we are experiencing a fast change in the structures of our society. The classical structure of labour force which have prevailed during the 19th and 21st Century is changing due to the development of a new society of knowledge. In this context, words such as specialization, stability or continuity have been replaced for other words such as flexibilization, adaptability or mobility (Gallie & Paugam, 2000).

Some authors such as Ulrich Beck are of the opinion that what is today at stake is the same conception of work (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002).

This new situation, which has been mainly caused to the current globalisation, has produced in Europe a dramatic increase of low-wage jobs. In addition, the globalisation itself has produced an important change on our structured societies: this industrial society, built under stable and predictable structures, is continuously been eroded by the new changes, which are producing drastic changes in multiple areas (Díez-Nicolas & López-Narbona, 2019).

That is why we are currently facing multiple inequalities in different areas in a fast changing environment which gives the possibility to grow rapidly and have success but, at the same time, multiplies the inequalities and creates a wide mosaic of situations of poverty and welfare, of success and failure (Brugue, Gomà, & Subirats, 2002).

This situation of change and wide transformation has to be tackled by the public authorities, which must act and react inside a globalized market by using an institutional structure which continues to be linked to a concrete regional area.

Public institutions at the central level are losing their classical influence through decentralisation, internationalisation and the private management of public services, which creates a situation where interdependence is the basis of the relations between all those institutions, instead of the classic notion of hierarchy (Kickert, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 1997).

And this current scenario has created more situations of social exclusion (Cruz Morato, García Lizana, & García Mestanza, 2017). Those situations demand that, the classic institutional framework of the Welfare State, which has been fighting against inequalities, should consider a reformulation of their techniques in order to be able to fight against the current and future challenges in this area (Sánchez-Lopez & De Paz Báñez, 2016).

The exclusion as such is perceived as a phenomenon, as a dynamic process due to the current and fast changes. We can see how the classical social exclusion from the industrial societies during the 19th and 21st Century has significantly changed during the last decades towards a more heterogeneous, dynamic and fast-change social exclusion, which is more difficult to identify and also to tackle (Arroyo Bovea, 2016).

In this context, some authors see how, during the industrialisation, collectives of exclusion were easier to identify than in our current era, as they were more homogeneous. In our day and age, social exclusion can be so heterogeneous and due to so many situations that, it is not only more difficult to identify, but also people tend to consider social exclusion as something which is inherent to the societies in the 21st Century (Pierson, n.d.).

However, being aware that this heterogeneous and fast-changing environment makes difficult to make a clearer classification of social exclusion situations, we can see several key factors which are very influential in the current scenarios of social exclusion inside our society (Cruz Morato et al., 2017).

One of those is the three-dimensional fragmentation of society.

In our day and age, the immigration wave in Europe, the rise of life-expectancy, the low birth rate in many of the current social structure, as well as the new heterogeneous family structure currently in place or the change of the classical patriarchal model are creating a wide fragmentation of the current society (Lewis, 1998).

Another important aspect is the impact that the current globalisation model has had over employment. The new situation has boosted young unemployment, has increased the structural unemployment of people of certain age and has created new several low-wage employments which also entails a weaker social rights protection (Sánchez-Lopez & De Paz Báñez, 2016).

This has created an erosion and a massive destruction of jobs in several countries severely hit by the crisis such as Spain, experiencing the loss of important social rights (Considine, Rosenfield, & Fleming, 2001).

Another important element which could be taken into account in this context is the lack of inclusivity of the current Welfare State. This is due, mainly, because the current exclusions which have been generated over the last years were not situations taken into account and therefore covered by the current Welfare State models (Ezcurra, 2019).

For example, current migrations which are sometimes out of the legal boundaries of the Welfare State, or the massive drop out of young students from education, are situations which were not initially foreseen inside the institutional structures of states (Brugue et al., 2002).

2. SOCIAL EXCLUSION, PROFILES AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC POLICIES TO FIGHT AGAINST SOCIAL EXCLUSION

According to several authors, there is a strong relation between inequality, poverty and low- wage salaries.

Nordic countries are the ones with a lower inequality rates, Anglo-Saxon countries and southern European countries are the ones with a higher inequality rates, being the central European Member States placed at the intermediate level (Brugue et al., 2002).

However, social exclusion is not always linked with unemployment, as this depends on each country. In the most advanced Welfare States, unemployment is not directly linked with poverty and exclusion.

Public politics offer several tools which help as a net against poverty (Fritzell, 2005). In other countries, such as the United States, even the job itself is not nowadays a guarantee of not being social excluded, due to the low-wages in several sectors.

According to the report from the European Anti-Poverty Network, although Spain has managed to reduce from 28.65% in 2015 to 27.9% in 2016, the numbers of people living in risk of poverty and social exclusion continue to be very high (Network, 2008).

And the risk of poverty and social exclusion can also be seen concerning living conditions, as exclusion is higher in degraded neighbourhoods, where people have less than 10 square meters per person and a lack of basic services such as water or heating. We can also see that social exclusion is higher in degraded neighbourhoods where people with a different ethnic or national origin live (Díez-Nicolas & López-Narbona, 2019).

In this context, social policies from public institutions are key to fight against social exclusion. However, it should be noted that social policies should not be taken just from a monopolistic point of view but as a tool which will foster inclusive and social development together with the ability to develop solid interaction networks with all community agents in the context of developing solid social frameworks (Gómez Urquijo, 2014).

States can act through social policies using several tools in the labour market, through the development of policies to boost the insertion of people excluded in the labour market.

Social policies are not the only field in which inequalities are created. Welfare States have the possibility to interact in several policies and they can act as powerful actors of social structure, they can articulate and disarticulate, change, intensify, erode, build or eradicate the different gaps in the economic, generational, ethnic or gender aspects. That is to say, the impact of social policies is very complex and multidirectional as it can be perceived in a first impression (Faura Martínez, Lafuente Lechuga, & García Luque, 2018).

The role of welfare policies has been changing through the last decades. On the 80s, advanced capitalists' countries had homogeneous social structures focused on the labour force and clear situations to identify and act with public policies.

Classic indicators, such as the lack of access to basic goods or the level of income were very useful to target and act in order to give replies in a classic way through the health and social insurance tools developed by the institutions (Baldwin, 1990).

On the 90s, when the globalisation model already begun with a stronger force, the social policies in practice were not able to face directly the problem of social exclusion. Since then, Welfare States have been trying to tackle the exclusion as one of the main issues to be taken into account for the new social policies (Brugue et al., 2002).

If we analyse the politics which are into place to fight against poverty, we can see that there are mainly 3 axes of intervention (Ibid.):

- Policies based on the degree of regulation. This refers to policies which are based in the consolidation of rights and do not depend on a concrete political action.
- Policies based on the different kind of transfers. In Welfare States from Anglo- Saxon countries we can see the bigger number of transfer policies: minimum-wages, handicap people or housing benefits. Nordic countries tend to base the system on minimum low insertion wages; southern countries are more focused on categorised transfers, even if over the last years there are relevant developments in minimum wages in countries such as France or Spain (Moreno Márquez, Fouassier Zamalloa, & Martín Herrero, 2015).
- Policies based on the territorial level. It is clear that all countries, in general, with the exception of the Anglo-Saxon model, develop a multilevel approach in the anti-exclusion policies.

3. THE OUTLOOK OF POVERTY AFTER THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

If we make an analysis of the data taken by the agenda 2020 of the European Commission, we can see that poverty and social exclusion has increased during the period of crisis. In general terms, in periods of crisis, rich people become richer and poor people become poorer (Gómez Urquijo, 2014).

Due to this situation, since 2008, the situation of poverty and social exclusion has become worst for children. By gender, men in the age of work are the ones who had suffered a bigger erosion of their labour force conditions.

However, women have experienced a significant rise of instability and access to the labour market, which has increased their social exclusion due to an increase of inactivity as well as the increase of part-time jobs for them (Arroyo Bovea, 2016).

The current poverty in Europe is also related with the erosion of the labour market. The crisis has increased the number of people depending on unemployment benefits and social services. An increase of long-term unemployment and a very high rate of youth unemployment has been created over the last years (Cruz Morato et al., 2017).

The increase of low wages has been concentrated in those Member States more severely hit by the crisis, which high unemployment rates and high public deficits in their national balances. They have tried to become more competitive and rebalance their macroeconomic figures by decreasing the labour conditions in order to change the situation and this has affected more to the ones with lower salaries and worst social conditions (Gómez Urquijo, 2014).

This has also affected to the territorial cohesion in Europe as well. Although poverty indicators were heterogeneous depending on each country, since 2010 the differences between Member States have increased significantly.

There has been a weak increase of poverty in northern countries and a high increase in the southern countries of Europe. This increase has been even wider in the countries of the Eurozone, due that, in order to rebalance their economic situation, eurozone countries which have severely suffered the crisis, have been forced to reduce public expenditure, social policies and labour conditions, in order to rebalance their public accounts (Sánchez-Lopez & De Paz Báñez, 2016).

And this context has created a different social situation in the south of Europe which should be analysed.

4. THE CRISIS OF THE SOCIAL MODEL IN COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN EUROPE

Between the 90s and 2007, Europe has suffered an expansion time based on a strong increase of credits. Between 2007 and 2011, banks started to suffer and increase of defaults, which reduced drastically **new** concession of mortgages. Since 2011, private debt in Europe started to decrease but public sector started to increase its debt (Ignacio & Morena, n.d.).

Public debt in the European Union before the crisis was already important: in 2007 Greece, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Hungary, Austria, France, Germany and Malta had more than 60% of their GDP of public debt, which was more than the criteria needed to enter in the Eurozone (Sánchez-Lopez & De Paz Báñez, 2016).

After the crisis, this situation increased drastically, especially in the countries with more private debt. Countries such as Ireland, Cyprus, Spain, the United Kingdom or Slovenia doubled their percentage of debt on the GDP between 2007 and 2014 (Ezcurra, 2019).

This rise was the consequence of a massive drop of public incomes together with a GDP decrease. The most visible consequence on the social area was the huge increase of inequality which came after this crisis. There is an important increase of unemployment, the consequent increase of public expenditure for the

unemployment schemes and this also came together with the bailout plans for the financial institutions in order to avoid the collapse of the system (Gómez Urquijo, 2014).

The first consequence of the crisis was the huge drop of GDP and unemployment. Greece was the country where GDP drop was higher, even higher than the unemployment rate. In Ireland, Spain and Portugal, the biggest impact affected unemployment, which was somehow reduced since there were some signals of economic recovery (Cruz Morato et al., 2017).

The biggest consequence was the increase of unemployment, which was considerable different depending on the country. While, since 2008, unemployment rate in Europe increased around 4%, this increase was 20% in countries such as Spain and Greece, having a rate two times higher compared with the EU average (Gómez Urquijo, 2014). Countries such as Ireland and Portugal also increased their unemployment rate. Those countries had also a higher temporary work rate, which was three times bigger in Spain compared with the EU average.

Before 2007, Ireland, Greece and Portugal were having important GDP growth and employment rates, with productivity increases and salary rises, which were going beyond the productivity. Spain and Italy were having an increase of GDP but a lower increase of employment, followed with a no rise of salaries in Italy and a rise of salaries in Spain. On the contrary, Germany was slightly increasing its productivity and salaries were going slightly down.

This different growth pattern was emphasized during the crisis, were correction severely applied in salaries and social benefits (Sánchez-Lopez & De Paz Báñez, 2016).

Due to this, the crisis has increased the level of poverty and exclusion in Europe. Gini index has increased in Europe, but the increase has been very different between countries. Spain is the country where the index has increased the most. Spain, Greece and Portugal, together with Latvia and Bulgaria, were the ones with a higher Gini index (Cruz Morato et al., 2017)

The situation varies in every country. However, the crisis has significantly increased the risk of social exclusion in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland. Rumania and Bulgaria continue to have the highest level of risk of social exclusion in the EU.

What we can say is that, the financial crisis has widened the already existing differences between the social welfare systems in the north and the south of Europe. While the crisis has not introduced new challenges for the countries in the north, which have given continuity to their welfare politics, reassigned their social expenses and rearranged their social services, southern countries have been forced to rationalise their welfare systems which were developed later in the time and also in a weaker way (Hemerijck, Dräbing, Vis, Nelson, & Soentken, n.d.).

And the differences between north and south have created an heterogeneous reply to tackle the crisis: while in southern countries there has been a reduction of public services and the rationalisation of social protection, together with the lowering of wages, in northern countries, the changes and the reforms have had a

more reduced impact and citizens have suffered much less on their welfare policies (Ezcurra, 2019).

Although the crisis has hit southern countries with more or less the same intensity, it has not created a convergency between their welfare models, because the policy reforms have been different in each country.

Before the crisis, European southern states offered a kind of hybrid welfare state, built by the adaptation of institutional pieces and other logical policies coming from other models. Between their characteristics, there was a corporatist system for the pension scheme, a social democrat character in the welfare and education system, but with a different degree of development depending on the country, and a third limited element composed by the family assistance and the role that the third sector has been playing in this field (Petmesidou, 2012).

The evolution of the social sphere during the 90s in the social sphere was influenced by the process of getting inside the European Monetary Union. This has created a different evolution in each country.

While Italy or Portugal started to develop an ambitious programme of reforms which was slowing down in 2000, Spain was able to increase and develop its welfare system through a wide negotiated process.

Greece, on the contrary, was unable to manage the differences of their welfare tools which were already in a weak situation before the crisis (Sotiropoulos, 2004).

During the 90s, Italy tried to develop a new equilibrium on the social protection. Pensions were subject of a rationalisation process and the resources were channelled to other areas of welfare which were not yet developed, such as social assistance, help to families or minimum wages programmes. At the same time, during 1998 and 2002 some programmes were developed to reduce inequalities (Ferrera, 2012).

But those efforts finished at the beginning of the 21st century. In this context, the crisis emerged in a context where the development of a welfare scheme was incomplete, as the scheme was more fragmented and diverse, with a mix of public and private partnership which was not strong enough to challenge the panorama which was arising after the financial crisis (León & Pavolini, 2014).

In the case of Spain, the efforts to develop the Welfare state have been evolving with a lot of consensus among political groups since the transition process. Throughout this process, the logic of financial sustainability has been one of the main points to be taken into consideration together with the process of decentralisation and the European convergence. During the beginning of the 21st century, the welfare model has been evolving and increasing through better coverage in new areas such as social assistance, family policies, conciliation, equality or a combination of the three logistics (Guillen, 2010).

During those years of economic growth, it is very important to mention the different achievements at the social level, such as new initiatives concerning insertion rents, education from 0 to 3 years or the recognition of social rights for

dependent people (González Begega, Luque Balbona, & Balbona, 2015). All those policies were severely hit during the crisis due to the huge increase of unemployment and the need to balance the imbalances, although the pension scheme has not suffered the same effects as in other countries, specially in the case of Greece.

In Portugal, as in Italy, there were important reforms during the 90s in order to achieve the main objectives to get inside the eurozone. During the first years of the 21st century, Portugal continued its reforms towards equity in the system, although the effects of those reforms before the crisis were limited and at the end not enough to fight without an important harm the effects of the crisis (González Begega et al., 2015).

But it is Greece the less dynamic case of southern Europe. The situation of a huge control at the national level for the socio-economic challenges, the low level of decentralisation or the conflictive labour relation of the Greek model has put into difficulties any attempt of reform of the Greek system.

In addition to that, there was no real influence of the EU recommendations concerning the social model in Greece before 2008. On top of that, before the crisis, the model had a considerable volume of expenses, a fragmented healthcare system and a system of care based on irregular migration flows. All in all, the Greek system before the crisis was a weak system, with low efficiency in transfer distributions (Sotiropoulos, 2004).

This was the situation in which the southern economies of the European Union had to face the financial crisis. In this context, it is important to mention that while Portugal and Greece had to ask for the financial bailout, this was not the case for Spain and Italy.

And this had consequences, as the room for decision making of central governments was much more limited in the countries which were subject to the bailout and less limited in the countries which were not subject to the bailout (Cruz Morato et al., 2017).

During this time, the reform process in Greece and Portugal has been focused in the central areas of the welfare system such as social protection, pensions and healthcare, going through a mixt model with more participation of the private sector and reinforcing the private participation (Petmesidou & Glatzer, 2015).

Spain and Italy also suffered the consequences of the crisis, but with a different perspective. In the case of Spain, measures of rationalisation were into place with a subsequent rationalisation on the healthcare system and on the services for the attention of irregular migrants.

However, the system did not suffer huge structural changes (Cruz Morato et al., 2017).

The main impact of austerity measures in Spain was the severe reduction of coverage of the system, particularly in the new areas of social development, such as equality, conciliation or dependency. On the other hand, other areas such as

pensions, healthcare and specially unemployment have suffered an intense pressure due to the lack of finances (Ezcurra, 2019).

In Italy, the crisis increased the inequalities already stated in the system. Reforms also took more time due to the fights between labour forces and politicians.

An in this context, after 5 years of austerity measures, the fiscal consolidation was able to achieve a weak surplus which might be consider not enough for some people, specially taking into account the huge social costs of the measures put into place and the social imbalances created.

5. THE SOCIAL POLICY IN THE EU TREATIES

The world social is mainly related to the way society is organised. In this sense, the European Union, as an institution which deals with policies which have an impact in the European societies refers to this work inside its main treaties.

If we have a look to the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, there are many mentions to the "social" dimension of the EU.

- Article 4.2, establishes social policy as one of the shared competences between the Union and member by stating the social policy for the aspects defined in this treaty.
- Article 5.3 establishes that "the Union may take initiatives to ensure coordination of Member State's social policies".
- Article 9 establishes that, "in defining and implementing its policies and activities, the Union shall take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health".
- In addition, title X of the treaty develops the social policy from article 151 to article 161 and title XI develops the European Social Fund from article 162 to 166.

6. THE REAL SOCIAL POLICY AT THE EU LEVEL

However, the social Pillar does not seem to play an important role in the European Union nowadays as the efforts have not achieved an important output in this area over the last decades.

It has been the European Council on July 22nd 1975, which has developed a European definition about poverty as the situation of people with insufficient incomes to have an acceptable level of life in the society where they live (Gómez Urquijo, 2014).

In this same moment, the level of poverty was considered under 50% of the national rent. And in this same year we can see the starting point of the EU action

with the EU first programme to fight against poverty, which will be followed by another two (1985-1988 and 1989-1994).

However, the action against poverty at the EU level was always under suspicion because there was no juridical bases, which were able to support such actions, until the Treaty of Amsterdam came and change this (Ibid.).

The Single European Act was a major revision of the Treaty of Rome and wanted to establish a single market and to develop the four freedoms of this single market: free movement of goods, free movement of capital, free movement of persons and freedom to establish and provide services.

The spill over effect that the single European market has played in multiple areas, such as in the Justice and Home Affairs or in the economic field has not happened with the same intensity in the social dimension, which has been very limited throughout the last decades.

That is why one could argue that the integration process has been dominated by the logic of economic integration due, mainly, to the division of Member States in the social area (Pochet, 2017).

Even if there were some attempts to advance in the social dimension and if there has been some progress, it seems that there is still a long way to run.

7. THE ATTEMPTS TO BOOST THE SOCIAL PILLAR

In this regard it is very important to mention that Commission President Jacques Delors played a decisive role in the 80s in this area trying to boost the social pillar through the health and safety issues as well as through the employment area (Tsarouhas & Copeland, n.d.). The commission also contributed to this area by initiating the European Social Dialogue (Hantrais, 1995).

In this context, the first serious attempt to boost this area in the European Communities was the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers (Eurofund, 2011) which was adopted on 9th December 1989 by all Member States bar the United Kingdom, which only adopted it in 1998, as part of the integration of the principles of the Charter into the Amsterdam Treaty and which marked an important progress in this area (O'Connor, 2005).

This charter established the main principles which should lead the European Social model (Eurofund, 2011), such as freedom of movement, employment, living and working conditions, social protection, training, equal treatment, health protection and safety at the workplace, protection of children, elderly, disable persons and the implementation of Member States in those areas.

The charter was a starting point, and stipulated in article 28 the need that the Commission should submit initiatives for the implementation of the principles of this charter.

To do so, the European Commission launched its communication COM (89) 568 final on 29th November 1989 concerning its action programme relating to the

implementation of the Community Charter of Basic Social Rights for Workers (European Commission, 1989).

Some directives followed the communication in order to advance in the social pillar.

The Council Directive 76/207/EEC on 9th February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions, the directive 2003/88/EC on the European Parliament and of the Council of 4th November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, the white paper of the commission called "European Social Policy- a way forward for the Union" COM(94) 333 final on 27th July 1994 and three framework agreements which were contained in the Council Directive 96/34/EC on 3rd June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC, the Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC and the Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed- term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP.

In this context, between 1975 and 1994, the European Union was carrying out several framework action programmes, with an overall budget of 90 billion euros and about 130 projects of a concrete territorial ground. For example, the programme "Poverty- III (1989-1994) was able to put into practice 41 pilot projects which were fighting against exclusion in a very innovative way.

Community activism during early 90s in the area of poverty clashed with a key fact: the cancellation of the EU programme "Poverty IV" by the Council for the period 1994-1999 (Brugue et al., 2002).

In this situation, it was very important that the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty relaunched the progression in the social pillar by making social exclusion policies subject to qualified majority voting (Tsarouhas & Copeland, n.d.). In 2000, the Nice European Council also set objectives to fight against poverty and social exclusion (Daly, 2006).

Those achievements were somehow integrated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights which were signed by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council, but the failure of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe lead the process until the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 in a context in which key actors were divided and willing to go ahead through an open method of coordination which supposed in practical terms a slowdown in the process of achieving more results in general.

However, for Gómez Urquijo, the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon considers poverty inside the EU policy was key, because the Council accepted that the figures of poverty were unacceptable and adopted the so-called Social Agenda of Europe, which identified the social policy as a productivity fact, linked to the competitiveness and the creation of high-quality jobs. The poverty agenda was key not only for the

fact of fighting against poverty, but also for the fact that a method was launched in order to make this policy operational.

The increase of poverty during they years of the financial crisis has been linked to that fiscal consolidation measures that were applied during this period (Gómez Urquijo, 2014). This fact has showed the need to advance more in those issues in order to make more Europe for his citizens.

8. THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AND THE STATE OF THE UNION DEBATE: FACING AN OPPORTUNITY TO BOOST THE SOCIAL PILLAR AND THE SIGNATURE OF THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

During the economic crisis, European Institutions were focused in the economic and fiscal policies in comparison with other EU policies (Costamagna, 2013). This is one of the reasons why, after the economic crisis that Europe has suffered over the last years, we have seen how inequality has increased across the European Union, especially concerning poverty and social exclusion (Fernandes & Rinaldi, 2016). That is why the social dimension has arrived again to the political agenda.

The European Commission has recognised in its recent studies that, at the beginning of the crisis, social expenditure played a key role in order to soften the effects of the crisis. Since 2010, this support to household decreased and, therefore, the structure of social protection expenses was severely hit. While in some Member states, social expenditure continued to increase in this period, in others, the level of expenditure went drastically down in areas such as healthcare, fight against social exclusion or housing. This shows how the fiscal consolidation had clear effects in the distribution of incomes, affecting specially the groups with less incomes (Gómez Urquijo, 2014).

This recovery after the economic crisis has also been an opportunity to reset the agenda 2020 and set wider and more ambitious goals for 2030. In this respect, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development adopted by all members of the United Nations in 2015 has been an important point for it.

Inside the 2030 agenda for sustainable development we can find the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs main goal is to call countries for specific actions to reduce poverty and improve health, education, tackle climate change or preserve our nature, between other actions. We can say that the 17 SDGs represent a good reference to be used together with indicators to see the progress of every country on specific topics and the actions foreseen to try to achieve the SDG at their national level (United Nations, n.d.).

In this concern, the European Union has taken the chance to upload its 2020 strategy and add to its 2030 strategy, which is very much focused on environment and sustainability, the SDGs. In this sense, in November 2016, the European Commission included the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 associated targets inside the 2030 agenda (Commission, n.d.).

To do so, the Commission detailed a set of actions in order to achieve the SDGs: invest in education and training for SDG 4, development of the investment plan for Europe for SDGs 8, 9, 12 and 13; development of a circular economy agenda for SDGs 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy for SDGs 2, 6, 8, 12, 13 and 15 or the development of actions to develop sustainable finances for achieving SDGs 8, 9, 13, 14 and 15 (European Commission, 2016a).

If we have a look at all of them, the investment plan for Europe together with the circular economy, the CAP or the development of sustainable finances are all of them actions which can help the achievement of the SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth). But the most important action mentioned by the European Commission, apart from all those ones, is the development of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the development of actions on corporate social responsibility and responsible business conduct to contribute to the protection of social rights (Ibid.).

Table 1. 2020 Strategy. Objectives and indicators connected with poverty

2020 Strategy		
Priorities	Star initiatives	Objective quantification
Intelligent growth	Union for innovation	75% population between 20 and 64 years should be employed
	Movement youth	
	A digital agenda for Europe	3% of GDP should be employed in R&I activities
Sustainable growth	A Europe using resources efficiently	Achieve the 20/20/20 objective concerning climate change and energy
	An industrial policy for the globalization era	School drop-outs should be less than 10%
Integrated growth	An agenda for new growth and qualifications	At least 40% of the youngest generation should become university graduates
	European platform against poverty	Poverty risk should threaten 20 million less people

Source: elaborated with data from the 2020 Strategy (Gómez Urquijo, 2014)

In grey you can find the indicators more connected with poverty

And in this context, President Jean Claude Juncker has called since 2015 in the State of the Union the need to work at the EU level to try to correct the inequalities that the crisis has caused in Europe over the last years.

In this sense, president Juncker mentioned in his state of the Union in 2015 that the crisis created wide differences in the euro area and fuelled doubts about social progress, claiming also that “what we need is to recreate a process of

convergence, both between Member States and within societies, with productivity, job creation and social fairness at its core” (Juncker, 2015).

And to do so, he pointed out that “the Commission will also work on a Pillar of Social Rights, building on the EU rules, in order to identify common principles and reference benchmarks which can serve greater convergence of employment and social performance over time” (Ibid.).

Following its speech, the Commission presented a preliminary outline of the European Pillar of Social rights in March 2016 and launched a broad public consultation in the field which was opened until the end of 2016 (European Commission, 2016b).

In his speech of the State of the Union in 2016, President Juncker referred again to the European Pillar of Social Rights, as on priority 5: a deeper and fairer economic and monetary union, he mention the clear will to make a “presentation of a European pillar of social rights and related initiatives, including on work-life balance (European Commission, 2016b)”.

President Juncker claimed in his State of the Union speech in 2017 that “if we want to avoid social fragmentation and social dumping in Europe, then Member States should agree on the European Pillar of Social Rights as soon as possible and at the latest at the Gothenburg summit” (European Commission, 2017a).

On November 17th 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights (Tajani, Parliament, & Juncker, 2017) was jointly signed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg, Sweden.

And in his last speech of the State of the Union, President Juncker referred to the European Pillar of Social Rights and also pointed out the need to continue fostering this area, turning the pillar into concrete law: “I would like the European Union to take better care of its social dimension. Those that ignore the legitimate concerns of workers and small businesses undermine European unity. It is time we turned the good intentions that we proclaimed at the Gothenburg Social Summit into law” (European Commission, 2018b, 2018a).

Thanks to the signature of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Union has a roadmap that should be put into practice in the following years and which has consolidated very important principles such as the equal opportunities and access to the labour market, the gender equality, the need to promote active support to employment, the development of fair working conditions, trying to promote secure and adaptable employment, the promotion of social dialogue and involvement of workers, the work-life balance or the healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection, the childcare and support to children, the right to adequate social protection, the unemployment benefits, the minimum income, the old age income and pensions, the health care, the inclusion of people with disabilities, the long term care, the housing and assistance for the homeless or the access to essential services (Ibid.).

Being this roadmap an essential tool to advance in this pillar, there is still a long way to achieve its goals inside a very uncertain horizon in the European Union.

In this context, in July 2019, candidate to the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, ensured that the European Union will try to boost the European Pillar of Social Rights. In this context, she has already settled an agenda for Europe in which she mentions Europe's social pillar, willing to put an action plan to fully implement it, in which she proposes, among other measures, that every worker of the EU will have a fair minimum wage, a European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme, to fight against poverty, especially among children through the European Child Guarantee, to ensure more equality of responsibilities through the work-life balance directive or to turn the Youth Guarantee into a permanent instrument to fight against youth unemployment (Von Der Leyen, 2019).

All those measures have to take also into account the unprecedented effects that the current health crisis on the coronavirus will create in the economy, special in sectors such as transport or tourism and with potential impacts on the inequality between the EU population.

In this context, a lot of voices have already raised the issue of a more than possible recession in Europe with tremendous costs due to this virus (Valero, 2020).

That is why the European Commission has launched several actions on coronavirus (European Commission, 2020b), including a 37 billion Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to provide liquidity to SMEs and the Health Care Sector (European Commission, 2020a). The European Central Bank has also launched a Pandemic Emergency Purchase programme (European Central Bank, 2020) to mitigate the current effects of the economic disruption caused by the propagation of the virus.

However, those decisions will not be the last and more actions should be taken in the near future, specially taking into account the vulnerable people.

9. BOOSTING THE SOCIAL PILLAR IN THE NEW LEGISLATIVE TERM AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MORE EUROPE

In 2019, the tendency of a decreasing turnout in the European elections has changed. We have passed from this decreasing turnout (61.99% of voters in 1979 to 42.61% in 2014) to an increase of the participation which this time was 50.66% (European Parliament, 2019)

However, although the important rise of Eurosceptic parties has not been that much as in the 2014 elections (Reguly, 2014), centre-left and centre-right parties have suffered important losses in detriment of far-right parties (Walker, 2019).

This rise of Euroscepticism can also have an important impact in the achievement of the social pillar. And in this sense, we could argue that a stronger social pillar could help the European institutions to recover and to reconnect with its citizens.

First of all, it is important to mention that, although we are not in the best scenario, we should remain confident, because, according to the Eurobarometer of spring 2019, a majority of Europeans (61%) are optimistic about the future of the EU, an increase of three percentage points compared to the last Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2019).

Second of all, we have to understand that the crisis has pointed out between Europeans, the need to advance more in the harmonisation of social policies: in this sense, the special Eurobarometer of September - October 2017 (European Commission, 2017b) stated that “to face major global challenges, 45% of Europeans think social equality and solidarity should be emphasised” (ibid. p.4) and “more than six in ten respondents (64%) are in favour of the harmonisation of social welfare systems within the European Union, with 19% saying they are strongly in favour” (Ibid.).

Having regard both Eurobarometers, it is clear that confidence is becoming to restore among European citizens which, at the same time are claiming for more harmonisation of social welfare systems and therefore for a stronger Social Pillar at the EU level.

10. CONCLUSION

Globalisation has widely changed the current status quo at the international level. This has no exceptions, and European countries have suffered the consequences of changes in the model, also in their welfare systems, and especially after the financial crisis of 2007.

This financial crisis has affected all European countries, increasing the social exclusion and putting into analysis the old structures of welfare states.

However, the effects have not been the same in all EU countries, as some of them were having a bigger impact on their social models.

In this regard, periphery, but specially, the southern European Countries have suffered huge consequences in their social welfare system, which was not as robust as the one established in northern or central European countries. High unemployment rates in Greece and Spain, reduction of social benefits or cuts in pension schemes have been the major consequences of this crisis.

And in this context, although that at the EU level there is a mention of the Social Pillar in the European treaties, this one remains unachieved no matter the efforts being made over the last years. For this reason, citizens are claiming more social policies at the EU level, especially after the financial crisis, which has raised inequality over the EU.

The European Union was not able to achieve its EU 2020 objectives. However, several actions over the last years might represent a turning point on this. Between those actions we can highlight the following ones: the willingness to achieve wider objectives by 2030, specially in the field of environment and sustainability but also in the field of reducing poverty and inequality, trying to reach

some of the remaining 2020 objectives in the social area; the fact that the EU is willing to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals from the United Nations, together with the signature of the European Pillar of Social Rights in Gothenburg, Sweden in November 2017; the declarations of Former President Juncker on the State of the Union in 2018 and of President Ursula Von der Leyen in her speech for nomination as president of the European Commission in 2019 as well as in her agenda for Europe constitute also a positive signal.

Member States and EU institutions are going to face a key moment to boost this area over the following's years, especially with the new humanitarian and economic crisis that most Member States are suffering due to the health crisis ongoing after the Coronavirus outbreak

The economic effect of this crisis, which might be even bigger than the one in 2008, can widen the social gap and increase inequalities not only between European citizens, but also between the European welfare models.

In this sense, the European Union has an opportunity to continue the implementation of the European Pillar of Social rights by making clear policy decisions in a context where Euroscepticism might cause several damages to the EU project.

That is why the development of social common measures at the EU level together with the development of a stronger pillar in this area are essential to continue the integration process and to increase support to the EU project among its citizens.

11. REFERENCES

- Arroyo Bovea, M. (2016). Exclusión social y pobreza en la Unión Europea. *Geographos*, 85, 104–131.
- Baldwin, P. (1990). *The Politics of Social Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511586378>
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization : institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. SAGE.
- Brugue, Q., Gomà, R., & Subirats, J. (2002). De la pobreza a la exclusión social: nuevos retos para las políticas públicas. *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, 60(33). Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/David/Desktop/De la pobreza a la exclusión social[2850].pdf
- Commission, E. (n.d.). EU approach to sustainable development. Retrieved March 17, 2020, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/international-strategies/sustainable-development-goals/eu-approach-sustainable-development_en
- Considine, D. B., Rosenfield, J. E., & Fleming, E. L. (2001). An interactive model study of the influence of the Mount Pinatubo aerosol on stratospheric methane and water trends. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres*, 106(D21), 27711–27727. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2001JD000331>
- Costamagna, F. (2013). The European Semester in Action: strengthening economic policy coordination while weakening the social dimension? *LPF-WEL*, 5.
- Cruz Morato, M. A., García Lizana, A., & García Mestanza, J. (2017). El impacto de la exclusión social sobre el crecimiento económico en la Unión Europea. *Revista de Economía Mundial, Sociedd de Economía Mundial*, 45, 43–63.
- Daly, M. (2006). EU social policy after Lisbon. *Journal of Common Market Studies*.



- Díez-Nicolas, J., & López-Narbona, A. M. (2019). Social Exclusion of Neighbours in Comparative World Perspective. *REIS*, 166, 45–64.
- Eurofund. (2011). Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers | Eurofound. Retrieved February 10, 2019, from <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/community-charter-of-the-fundamental-social-rights-of-workers>
- European Central Bank. (2020). ECB announces €750 billion Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP). Retrieved March 19, 2020, from https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2020/html/ecb.pr200318_1~3949d6f266.en.html
- European Commission. Communication from the Commission concerning its action programme relating to the implementation of the community charter of basic social rights for workers COM (89) 568 final (1989). Retrieved from http://aei.pitt.edu/1345/1/Social_charter_COM_89_568.pdf
- European Commission. (2016a). Next steps for a sustainable European future European action for sustainability. Brussels. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2016%3A739%3AFIN>
- European Commission. (2016b). State of the Union 2016 - Publications Office of the EU. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/c9ff4ff6-9a81-11e6-9bca-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-30945725>
- European Commission. (2017a). President Jean Claude Juncker's State of the Union Address 2017*. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-17-3165_en.htm
- European Commission. (2017b). Special Euro barometer 467 Report. Future of Europe. Social Issues. Retrieved from https://www.google.be/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKewi25_PUnZ7ZAhVN2qQKHQyTA8IQFgg7MAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fcommfrontoffice%2Fpublicopinion%2Findex.cfm%2FResultDoc%2Fdownload%2FDocumentKy%2F80645&usg=AOvVaw3-
- European Commission. (2018a). State of the Union 2018 | European Commission. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/state-union-2018-2018-sep-14-0_en
- European Commission. (2018b). State of the Union 2018 the hour of european sovereignty. Brussels. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf
- European Commission. (2019). Europeans upbeat about the state of the European Union. Retrieved November 14, 2019, from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_4969
- European Commission. (2020a). Commission acts to make available 37 billion euro from the EU budget to address the Coronavirus. Retrieved March 19, 2020, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/commission-acts-make-available-37-billion-euro-eu-budget-address-coronavirus-2020-mar-13_en
- European Commission. (2020b). European Commission's action on coronavirus. Retrieved March 19, 2020, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/european-commissions-action-coronavirus_en
- European Parliament. (2019). Home | 2019 European election results | European Parliament. Retrieved November 14, 2019, from <https://election-results.eu/>
- Ezcurra, R. (2019). Las disparidades regionales y la desigualdad interna en los países de la Unión Europea. *Revista de Economía Mundial*, 51, 139–162.
- Faura Martínez, Ú., Lafuente Lechuga, M., & García Luque, O. (2018). Análisis de las subpoblaciones Arope en la Unión Europea en tiempos de crisis. *Revista Electrónica de Comunicaciones y Trabajos de ASEPUMA*, 19(2), 81–94. <https://doi.org/10.24309>
- Fernandes, S., & Rinaldi, D. (2016). Is there such a thing as “Social Europe? Notre Europe.
- Ferrera, M. (2012). *Le politiche sociali : l'Italia in prospettiva comparata. Il mulino.*
- Fritzell, J. (2005). *Nordic Welfare States in the European Context.* Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203976920>

- Gallie, D., & Paugam, S. (2000). *Welfare regimes and the experience of unemployment in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://www.worldcat.org/title/welfare-regimes-and-the-experience-of-unemployment-in-europe/oclc/833672459>
- Gómez Urquijo, L. (2014). *La consideración de la pobreza en la actual estrategia de coordinación y supervisión económica de la UE*. Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/David/AppData/Local/Packages/microsoft.windowscommunicationsapps_8wekyb3d8bbwe/LocalState/Files/S0/5/Dialnet-LaConsideracionDeLaPobrezaEnLaActualEstrategiaDeCo-4956030\[2849\].pdf](file:///C:/Users/David/AppData/Local/Packages/microsoft.windowscommunicationsapps_8wekyb3d8bbwe/LocalState/Files/S0/5/Dialnet-LaConsideracionDeLaPobrezaEnLaActualEstrategiaDeCo-4956030[2849].pdf)
- González Begega, S., Luque Balbona, D., & Balbona, D. L. (2015). Crisis económica y deterioro de los pactos sociales en el sur de Europa: Los casos de España y Portugal. *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, 73(2), e013. <https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2014.03.17>
- Guillen, A. M. (2010). *Defrosting the Spanish Welfare State: the Weight of Conservative and Corporatist Traditions*. Retrieved February 24, 2019, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228385205_Defrosting_the_Spanish_Welfare_State_the_Weight_of_Conservative_and_Corporatist_Traditions
- Hantrais, L. (1995). *Social Policy in the European Union*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hemerijck, A., Dråbing, V., Vis, B., Nelson, M., & Soentken, M. (n.d.). *EUROPEAN WELFARE STATES IN MOTION*. Retrieved from <http://www.neujobs.eu>
- Ignacio, J., & Morena, P. (n.d.). *Consecuencias socioeconómicas de la crisis en Europa*. *Revista Económica-Niterói*.
- Juncker, J.-C. (2015). *State of the Union 2015*. Brussels. Retrieved from www.ec.europa.eu/soteu.
- Kickert, W. J. M., Walter J. M., Klijn, E.-H., & Koppenjan, J. F. M. (1997). *Managing complex networks: strategies for the public sector*. Sage.
- León, M., & Pavolini, E. (2014). 'Social Investment' or Back to 'Familism': The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Family and Care Policies in Italy and Spain. *South European Society and Politics*, 19(3), 353–369. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2014.948603>
- Lewis, J. (1998). *Gender, social care, and welfare state restructuring in Europe*. Ashgate.
- Moreno Márquez, G., Fouassier Zamalloa, M., & Martín Herrero, M. J. (2015). Política de garantía de ingresos y población de origen extranjero en el País Vasco. *Evidencias empíricas y deslegitimación discursiva*. *Zerbitzuan*, (58), 51–60. <https://doi.org/10.5569/1134-7147.58.05>
- Network, E. A. poverty. (2008). *El estado de la pobreza*. Madrid. Retrieved from www.eapn.es
- O'Connor, J. S. (2005). Policy coordination, social indicators and the social-policy agenda in the European Union. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 14(4), 34–61.
- Petmesidou, M. (2012). Southern Europe. In *The Routledge Handbook of the Welfare State*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203084229.ch18>
- Petmesidou, M., & Glatzer, M. (2015). The Crisis Imperative, Reform Dynamics and Rescaling in Greece and Portugal. *European Journal of Social Security*, 17(2), 158–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/138826271501700202>
- Pierson, J. (n.d.). *Tackling poverty and social exclusion: promoting social justice in social work*.
- Pochet, P. (2017). *The European Pillar of Social Rights in historical perspective | New European Trade Unions Forum*. Retrieved February 10, 2019, from <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/netuf/2017/10/17/the-european-pillar-of-social-rights-in-historical-perspective/>
- Reguly, E. (2014). *Anti-Euro, Euroskeptic parties win big in EU parliamentary elections - The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/anti-euro-euroskeptic-parties-poised-to-make-eu-gains/article18836022/>
- Sánchez-Lopez, C., & De Paz Báñez, M. (2016). Desigualdad y pobreza en la gran recesión, diferencias entre los países de la UE. *Revista de Economía Mundial, Sociedad de Economía Mundial*, 44, 93–123.
- Sotiropoulos, D. A. (2004). The EU's Impact on the Greek Welfare State: Europeanization on Paper? *Journal of European Social Policy*, 14(3), 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928704044627>



- Tajani, A., Parliament, E., & Juncker, J.-C. (2017). The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission solemnly proclaim the following text as the European Pillar of Social Rights EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS European Pillar of Social Rights. Brussels. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet_en.pdf
- Tsarouhas, D., & Copeland, P. (n.d.). The European Pillar of Social Rights: perpetuating asymmetrical governance? Retrieved from <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/37dab2f3-adaf-4ce1-bdcd-7d3a962fa59c.pdf>
- United Nations. (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved March 17, 2020, from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>
- Valero, J. (2020). Coronavirus ‘very likely’ to push Europe into recession, Commission warns – EURACTIV. Retrieved March 17, 2020, from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/coronavirus-very-likely-to-push-europe-into-recession-commission-warns/>
- Von Der Leyen, U. (2019). A Union that strives for more My agenda for Europe. Brussels.
- Walker, S. (2019). European elections: far-right “surge” ends in a ripple | Politics | The Guardian. Retrieved November 14, 2019, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/27/european-elections-far-right-surge-ends-in-a-ripple>