

STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN DELEGATES

Introduction

European countries have a longstanding experience in social security and social protection. Although not perfect, we are proud of this achievement.

Principles

Each country has the responsibility to build a fair social protection system. Ensuring universal social protection coverage is ultimately a public obligation and in the competency of countries. It was controversially discussed whether social protection systems should be financed exclusively or only mainly by public sources.

Achieving universality should be considered as an important principle of social protection. The following aspects complement universal social protection in Europe:

- Solidarity
- Subsidiarity
- Pluralism
- Sustainability
- Tripartite Social Dialogue / Social Dialogue with Civil Society
- Equality / Equity (subject of controversy)

There are no best solutions or no one-size-fits-all approach to universal coverage. Each country has different social needs, development objectives and economic and financial resources.

Challenges

European welfare states are currently facing serious pressures to ensure further progress towards universal coverage. It is especially challenging to maintain the achieved levels of population, services and costs covered.

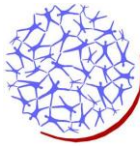
The drift of income distribution towards capital revenue should be reversed for assuring fair financing of social protection. This issue was controversially discussed.

The way forward

European delegates promote international cooperation - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, between international organisations, governments, social partners and civil society.

Universal coverage requires a broad approach, taking into account gender aspects as well as vulnerable groups.

Since poverty is also a challenge in Europe, all citizens have to benefit from growth as stated by the EU-2020 Strategy. Additional policies might be considered, if raising employment rates, especially for women, young people and older workers, turns out to be insufficient.



Final messages

Social protection systems in European countries limit the detrimental social impact of financial and economic crises.

We applaud the broad-based initiative of Brazil to promote the global movement to worldwide universal coverage. We consider the ILO conventions, such as convention 102, and the WHA resolution 58.33¹ to be the minimum level of social protection in a globalised world.

Let us take advantage of the momentum to move the international agenda forward.

¹ The title of the resolution is: "Sustainable health financing, universal coverage and social health insurance".