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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0116/2023**

8.2.2023

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

further to Questions for Oral Answer B9-0000/2023 and B9-0000/2023

pursuant to Rule 136(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion  
(2022/2840(RSP))

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on behalf of the ID Group

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**Kósa, Enikő Győri**

**B9-0116/2023**

**European Parliament resolution on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (2022/2840(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union,
  - having regard to Article 156 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
  - having regard to the non-paper by Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands and Sweden ahead of the Porto Social Summit of May 2021,
  - having regard to the Council Recommendation of 24 June 1992 on common criteria concerning sufficient resources and social assistance in social protection systems<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the Commission proposal of 28 September 2022 for a Council recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (COM(2022)0490),
  - having regard to European Court of Auditors Special Report 25/2021 of 8 December 2021 entitled ‘ESF support to combat long-term unemployment: Measures need to be better targeted, tailored and monitored’<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the questions to the Council and to the Commission on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (O-000050/2022 – B9-0000/2023 and O-000051/2022 – B9-0000/2023),
  - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs,
- A. whereas in 2021, 95.4 million people in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion<sup>4</sup>;
- B. whereas the people most affected by or at risk of falling into poverty are single mothers, older people, people with disabilities, a low level of education, long-term illnesses or

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 245, 26.8.1992, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 41, 3.2.2023, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=60158>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20211015-1>.

chronic diseases, people who have experienced long-term unemployment or a long absence from the labour market, and migrants; whereas in 2021, 16 % of European pensioners were at risk of poverty or social exclusion;

- C. whereas in 2020, around 36 million EU citizens, accounting for approximately 8 % of the population, were unable to keep their homes adequately warm; whereas around 6 % of the EU population had arrears in their utility bills that same year; whereas in 2018, the poorest European households (i.e. those in the lowest 10 % income bracket) spent 8.3 % of their expenditure on energy<sup>5</sup>;
- D. whereas the energy crisis and (green) inflation, which were both caused and have been fuelled by EU climate policy and legislation and the European Central Bank's low-interest policy, and have been exacerbated by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, will increase the number of citizens and households affected by insecurity and poverty;
- E. whereas the Fit for 55 package will push millions of Europeans into energy poverty; whereas the extension of the EU Emissions Trading System to buildings and transport will penalise low-income households that cannot afford to invest in expensive energy-saving renovations and installations of renewable energy systems; whereas low-income households are likely to be hit hardest by this policy, which will aggravate their already precarious situation;
- F. whereas jobless people are at a higher risk of poverty; whereas providing people with high-quality jobs is the best way to lift them out of poverty; whereas, in this regard, tailor-made training and (re)skilling are essential to (re)integrate people into the labour market;
- G. whereas the confinement measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated the problem of long-term unemployment in the EU; whereas according to European Court of Auditors Special Report 25/2021, measures funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) were not always targeted at long-term unemployed people and thus did not always address their specific needs;
- H. whereas minimum income schemes (MISs) are benefits and services that together constitute a safety net for people who, whether in or out of employment, have insufficient financial resources to ensure a minimum standard of living for themselves and their dependents<sup>6</sup>;
- I. whereas according to Article 156 TFEU, the provision and management of social security systems is a Member State competence, which the EU coordinates but does not harmonise; whereas welfare levels, economic capacity and the social security systems in place differ substantially across the Member States; whereas national social safety nets are very different and thus not comparable;
- J. whereas guaranteed MISs exist in all Member States as last-resort income support

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<sup>5</sup> Briefing – 'Energy poverty in the EU', European Parliament, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services, 4 July 2022.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.caritas.eu/minimum-income-schemes-to-ensure-dignity-for-all>.

programmes aimed at protecting low-income households from poverty; whereas the design of these schemes varies depending on each Member State's approach to social protection; whereas the different MISs in Europe can be broadly divided into five types<sup>7</sup>;

- K. whereas estimates of the non-take-up of minimum income support typically range from 30 % to 50 % of the eligible population, which can be explained by factors such as a lack of information and the complexity of access<sup>8</sup>;
- L. whereas some people are able and available to (re-)enter the labour market, while others are not (immediately) able to work, such as people with severe disabilities or health problems<sup>9</sup>;
1. Notes the Council Recommendation of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion; acknowledges that adequate MISs established by Member States can help to reduce poverty; reaffirms that social policy should nevertheless be an exclusive competence of the Member States;
  2. Highlights the fact that poverty and the risk of poverty can only be reduced through measures by the Member States that promote stable and high-quality employment, for which policies aimed at stable economic growth and investment are required;
  3. Believes that it is essential for MISs to be well designed in order to ensure that they do not create disincentives to work or lock people into a cycle of dependence on welfare benefits and trap them in poverty; is of the opinion that income from regular work (even at minimum wage level) must always be higher than the amount provided through minimum income support to ensure that the take-up of work is not disincentivised and irregular work is not incentivised;
  4. Stresses that MISs should be considered a temporary form of support and organised as pathways to employment and, therefore, be accompanied by active policies for (re)integration into the labour market;
  5. Stresses that MISs are financed at national or subnational level and correspond to national or regional contexts; stresses that the Member States are entitled to set and formulate the eligibility criteria and impose conditions, such as beneficiaries being precluded from receiving unemployment benefits or having to follow compulsory education, perform public work or accept job offers;
  6. Stresses that policy decisions about MISs in the Member States are made at national, regional or even local level, and sometimes even also involve a combination of these governance levels; stresses that the delivery of MISs at lower governance levels can contribute to a more targeted and efficient approach, given that household needs vary

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<sup>7</sup> Working paper – ‘Guaranteed Minimum Income Schemes in Europe: Landscape and Design’ (WP/21/179), International Monetary Fund, Fiscal Affairs Department, July 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Commission proposal of 28 September 2022 for a Council recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (COM(2022)0490).

<sup>9</sup> Commission proposal of 28 September 2022 for a Council recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (COM(2022)0490).

between regions in the Member States;

7. Notes that in many Member States, household composition is an essential consideration when establishing the level of support and household-based means testing is consequently applied in these countries;
8. Is of the opinion that when calculating the amount provided via MISs, in-kind benefits should be taken into account to ensure that the total is not excessive but rather reflective of real needs;
9. Believes that the access criteria for MISs should be clear and coherent and encourages the Member States to simplify the relevant administrative procedures; considers it important for the relevant authorities, centres and public administrations to provide potential beneficiaries with all the necessary information and assist them in submitting their applications for income support; encourages the Member States to make both digital and non-digital tools available to assist potential beneficiaries;
10. Encourages the Member States to regularly evaluate their MISs and update them when necessary so that they reflect the cost of living at local, regional and national levels;
11. Stresses that MISs are funded by the taxpayer and should therefore be used transparently; encourages the Member States to closely monitor both the adequacy and the effectiveness of their MISs in combating poverty; stresses, in this regard, the importance of good coordination and information exchange between the relevant national authorities and agencies in the fields of social protection and labour market integration;
12. Is of the opinion that promoting high-quality jobs and job retention requires active labour market policies encompassing lifelong learning and personalised support and guidance; encourages the Member States to tailor these measures to the individual needs and situations of beneficiaries of minimum income support; calls on the Member States to use the ESF+, coupled with a personalised approach, to help long-term unemployed people in the 2021-2027 period;
13. Encourages the Member States to invest in public childcare to enable women to participate in the labour market;
14. Notes that in some Member States, MISs are also funded by way of contributions from employers and employees; stresses, in this regard, the importance of preserving both these national approaches to MISs and the competitiveness of enterprises and businesses;
15. Considers it essential for the fiscal cost of MISs to be carefully monitored; considers that the eligibility to receive minimum income support could be restricted once a beneficiary has participated in such a scheme for a given amount of time or received a certain amount of support;
16. Is concerned by the dramatically growing number of migrants and refugees who are beneficiaries of MISs in many Member States, a phenomenon that has been caused and fuelled by failed migration policies; believes that MISs could be a pull factor for mass

immigration; is concerned that this increasing financial burden will undermine the social protection systems of different Member States;

17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.