



Vice President. Valdis Dombrovskis
European Commission
Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union

Re: Eurodiaconia proposal for the Annual Growth Survey 2017

Brussels, 17th October 2016

Dear Vice President Dombrovskis,

Eurodiaconia is a European network of social and health care organisations founded in the Christian faith and promoting social justice. Together our membership represents the needs and unique experiences of 47 national and regional organisations in 32 countries, providing social and health services to the most vulnerable across Europe. Our members have taken a close interest in the European Union's impact on social policies in their countries, mainly through the European Semester.

Looking at Eurodiaconia members' involvement in the European Semester and at the social situation in Europe we urge the European Commission to work more actively toward a rebalancing of social and economic priorities. Eurodiaconia recognises the efforts already undertaken through existing proposals such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, but calls on a stronger political emphasis on the need to directly fight against poverty, social exclusion and inequality and ultimately reduce social imbalances between member states. We therefore present in this letter our proposals for the Annual Growth Survey 2017, reflecting our members' common experience and values.

1. The Annual Growth Survey must recognise the core elements of social imbalances in the member states of the European Union and work towards rebalancing social and economic goals. To do so, the AGS must facilitate the following: tackling extreme poverty, creating conditions for quality employment, ensuring adequate and affordable social and health care services, promoting the inclusion of migrants and minorities and reducing poverty among specific groups such as children, Roma and people with disabilities.
2. In doing so, the AGS should therefore clarify the connection between adequacy and fiscal sustainability of social protection. This will bring more coherence to the European Semester process which too often emphasizes the need for social investment whilst simultaneously insisting on stringent fiscal consolidation.
3. The AGS 2017 should explain how the European Semester's new, separate set of CSRs for the Eurozone will contribute to drive upward social convergence in a more coherent and comprehensive manner, for instance by encouraging initiatives relating to quality employment or the tackling of poverty.





4. The AGS should therefore clearly refer to the importance of poverty reduction and quality employment as overall objectives of the European governance process, stressing in particular the role of the proposed Social Pillar in supporting Member States in addressing poverty and social exclusion.
5. Following on from the State of the European Union's emphasis on the need for more investment, the AGS 2017 should bring in the possibility of greater budgetary flexibility for social investment, particularly in areas where there is a demonstrable social and economic return on investment.
6. The AGS ought to also highlight the importance of social indicators in the evaluation of members state's position when completing the Stability and Growth Pact
7. The AGS must recall the importance of civil dialogue and encourage a stronger synergy in the process to reinforce the links and relevance between EU policy processes and local needs.
8. The AGS ought to also highlight the importance of social indicators in the evaluation of members state's position when completing the Stability and Growth Pact

I thank you in advance for the attention you will be giving to this letter, and in doing so for the consideration you are giving to our members' work and experience. I and my team remain available to discuss further these points or how can our organisation support you in working together for a European Union at the service of people and their wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

Heather Roy
Secretary General

Eurodiaconia 

Rue Joseph II, 166
1000 Brussels, Belgium
@hjroy
@eurodiaconia

Tel +32 (0)2.234.38.60
Fax +32 (0)2.234.38.65
GSM + 32 (0)479 552780 - NEW NUMBER

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
heather.roy@eurodiaconia.org
www.eurodiaconia.org