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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)/Council
Subject:	Commission participation, on behalf of the EU, in the Global Coalition for Social Justice <i>- Authorisation to sign an NBI</i>

1. In November 2023, the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) unanimously endorsed the Global Coalition for Social Justice (GCSJ). This initiative aims at promoting multilateral cooperation and partnerships pursuing the overarching objective of advancing social justice and decent work for all.
2. On 24 November 2023, the ILO invited the Commission to participate, on behalf of the European Union, in the Global Coalition for Social Justice.¹
3. Given the voluntary and non-legally binding nature of the GCSJ and the modalities of participation, a non-binding instrument (NBI) procedure was considered appropriate.

¹ 5499/24 - ADD1

4. As the first step on an NBI procedure, on 18 December 2023, the Commission formally informed the Council in a note² of its intention to enter into discussions with a view to becoming a partner on behalf of the EU in the Global Coalition for Social Justice. The Commission's intention was discussed at a meeting of the Social Questions Working Party on 8 January 2024. Delegations welcomed the Commission's intention.
5. On 16 January 2024, the Commission informed the delegations, in a note³, of its intention to sign a letter responding positively to the ILO's invitation.
6. The note was accompanied by a draft letter.⁴ By means of this draft letter, which emphasises the Union's commitment to social justice, the Union would subscribe to the Terms of Reference of the CGSJ⁵ and outline potential areas of cooperation in addressing inequality, realising labour rights, expanding employment opportunities, providing protection, strengthening just transitions, and reinforcing social dialogue.
7. At the meeting of the Social Question Working Party on 25 January, in accordance with the arrangements for non-binding instruments (second step of an NBI procedure), the Commission presented its note, draft letter, and the Terms of Reference setting out the purpose and governance of the Global Coalition for Social Justice.
8. At the meeting, the Commission clarified that its participation in the Global Coalition for Social Justice on behalf of the European Union does not impose any new administrative or financial obligations on the EU Member States, nor does it prevent EU Member States from joining the GCSJ individually and bringing their own contribution. The Commission undertook to first seek the authorisation from the Council, should it wish to contribute to the GCSJ with a project that does not fall under one of the priorities listed in the Annex to the letter, which has been discussed in the Social Question Working Party.

² 17057/23
³ 5491/24
⁴ 5499/24
⁵ 5499/24 – ADD2

9. All delegations expressed their views on the draft letter, by which the Commission intends to reply to the ILO's invitation, and none opposed it.
 10. Against this background, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to suggest to the Council to authorise the Commission to participate on behalf of the EU as a partner in the Global Coalition for Social Justice and to reply to the ILO's invitation with the letter as set in the Annex to this note.
 11. It is understood that the authorisation of the Commission to participate on behalf of the Union as a partner in the Global Coalition for Social Justice is without prejudice to the procedures to be followed at Union level, including the possible involvement of the Council as a policy-making institution, should any specific initiative be taken in the context of the GCSJ.
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Brussels, XX/01/2024

Dear Director General,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 24 November 2023 addressed to President Ursula von der Leyen in which you invite the European Commission to join the Global Coalition for Social Justice, a voluntary platform to increase political commitment on advancing social justice. This initiative comes at a crucial time for ensuring just transitions and the upholding of labour rights around the globe. It is a common task for the international community to achieve the goals of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, and the Coalition will certainly help to advance this objective.

I am therefore pleased to inform you that **the European Commission, on behalf of the European Union**, shares the political commitment to advance social justice globally and has decided to become a **partner of the Global Coalition for Social Justice**.

As you know, the European Union is a strong proponent of decent work and social inclusion, both within its borders and worldwide. We stand ready to deepen our close cooperation to advance social justice and to explore new collaborative avenues with other partners, based on the voluntary and non-binding nature of the initiative. The EU will also continue to advocate the importance of including social justice, as well as fair and just transitions, in all relevant discussions at international level and in multilateral fora.

We welcome the areas of immediate action highlighted in your Terms of Reference, in particular the need to: address inequality, discrimination and exclusion; realise labour rights; provide protection and build resilience; and reinforce institutions of social dialogue. I believe our ongoing collaboration, including through various projects (outlined in an annex to this letter), provides a solid base for furthering the objectives of the Coalition, which are fully in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights and are well reflected and pursued in our current policies

Finally, allow me to underline my appreciation for the knowledge-sharing aspect of the Coalition, as this is crucial to fully understand the challenges and complexity of social justice.

Please do not hesitate to contact my services in the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion who will be the contact point for this initiative (Laura CORRADO, Head of Unit laura.corrado@ec.europa.eu or EMPL-E3-UNIT@ec.europa.eu).

I look forward to contributing to the Global Coalition for Social Justice and allow me to express my gratitude for your personal leadership and vision on this initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Nicolas Schmit

ANNEX

Potential areas of cooperation under the Global Coalition for Social Justice

In line with the priority areas presented in the Terms of Reference, the European Commission has identified the following avenues for potential cooperation and contribution to the Coalition, subject to further discussion with your offices and with the understanding that priorities may evolve on both sides.

Priority 1 - “Addressing inequality, discrimination and exclusion”: initiatives aimed at reducing multidimensional inequalities and preventing and addressing violence and harassment.

Priority 2 - “Realising labour rights as human rights, ensuring human dignity and meeting basic needs”: this is the core of our projects on supply chains, aiming for a sustainable future of work, an effective application of the corporate sustainability due diligence and ending child labour.

Priority 3 - “Expanding access to and capabilities for productive and freely chosen employment and sustainable enterprises”: projects on the future of work, formalisation or supporting youth employment and investment in skills, and programmes for labour migration in the fishing sector among others.

Priority 4 - “Providing protection and building resilience”: the European Commission supports inclusive national social protection systems through various projects.

Priority 5 - “Strengthening just transitions and the social dimension of sustainable development, trade and investment”: joint project on just transition in the climate processes.

Priority 6 - “Reinforcing institutions of social dialogue”: projects on advancing decent work in supply chains through sectoral social dialogue and cooperation with the Global Deal initiative underline our commitment to social dialogue beyond our borders.

Moreover, the European Union recognises the global nature of social justice and incorporates it as a transversal topic in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) for Global Challenges.