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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Porto Social Forum 2023 (Porto, 26-27 May)  
*- Information from the Portuguese delegation*

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Delegations will find attached information from the Portuguese delegation on the above subject, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 13 March 2023 (Any Other Business item).

### Porto Social Forum 2023

The Porto Social Summit, organised in Porto on 7 and 8 May 2021, was one of the highlights of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU. This event brought together EU leaders, social partners, and civil society. Its main objective was to set the European social agenda for the next decade – placing people at the centre of Europe's recovery to ensure that no one is left behind.

The Summit achieved two major outcomes.

First, the Porto Social Commitment, one of the most comprehensive and ambitious tripartite commitments ever reached in the EU, was endorsed by the Presidents of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Portuguese Prime Minister holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU at the time, European social partners and civil society (Social Platform). Through this commitment, partners acknowledged the importance of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) Action Plan and identified priorities and objectives in responding to the economic recovery projected for the post-Covid.

Second, the Porto Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the EU, which established the strategic priorities for the implementation of the EPSR across the EU.

Both agreements backed the three 2030 headline targets of the Action Plan:

- Achieve an employment rate of at least 78%.
- Ensure that at least 60% of adults attend training courses every year.
- Reduce the number of people at risk of social exclusion or poverty by at least 15 million people, including 5 million children.

Since Porto, Member States and EU Institutions continued to work for a fairer and more resilient economy by promoting the adequacy of minimum wages and increasing pay transparency, establishing a European Child Guarantee and the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, adopting the Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 and the Social Economy Action Plan, and by pursuing efforts in many other fields such as improving the working conditions in the platform economy and enhancing social dialogue in the EU.

Acknowledging that the EU possesses the means to carry out the monitoring of the commitments set out in the Porto Social Summit, through the instruments for coordinating its economic and social policies, in particular the European Semester, the biennial meeting of the Porto Social Forum is an opportunity to renew the spirit of debate and convergence of the Porto Social Summit, as well as to introduce into the debate new concerns and priorities, arising from significant economic, social and political changes.

The meetings of the Porto Social Forum aim to monitor the development of the EPSR by mobilising forces for its development and discussing its priorities; to debate the responses to the EU's major structural challenges in their impact on the social dimension and the progress of cohesion; and to reflect on the different perspectives of civil society actors regarding the cyclical challenges that the complex global situation is posing to the EU and its citizens.

The 2023 edition will focus on three major issues.

Firstly, the European Year of Skills. The Forum will be a space for highlighting the objectives of the European Year of Skills in line with the EPSR Action Plan goals, with the purpose of strengthening Member States' efforts to value skills and lifelong learning. Emphasis will be given to the connection with the priorities of the digital transition.

Secondly, Social Europe and the EPSR in a stronger Union. At a time marked by the strategic debate around the enlargement of the EU and the strengthening of its role as a central actor in Europe and in the world, it is crucial to reaffirm the values of Social Europe and the achievements of the Member States in terms of employment, social protection and equality.

Finally, the social impact of the two crises – the fall-out of the Covid pandemic and the impact of the Russian war of aggression – as well as the importance of strong social policies and of the role of civil society. While the EU economy is adapting to the effects of inflation and war, we are still far from being able to assess their full impact, particularly on the weakest groups in our societies. A joint approach involving the social partners and civil society is an important tool for the necessary debate around the responses implemented by the EU and the Member States.