

## **FH-DA Joint Position Paper on Strengthening Social Dialogue in the EU**

The Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH) and the Confederation of Danish Employers (DA) welcomes the European Commission's upcoming communication and proposal for a Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union. We support with enthusiasm the Commission's focus on strengthening the social dialogue at national and European level.

FH and DA are strong believers in the importance and effectiveness of social dialogue at both national and European level. At the national level FH and DA has a long and strong tradition of collective bargaining going back to 1899. The history of negotiations and compromises between employees and employers as well as the trust and confidence that have been built up over the years is a critical element in the model of social dialogue.

FH and DA call upon the European Commission to include the following elements in the upcoming social dialogue initiatives:

- Although the promotion of social dialogue is a common objective of the EU and the Member States, the EU should not adopt binding measures which intervenes with self-regulatory models, such as the Danish labour market model<sup>1</sup>. EU can play a role in contributing to social dialogue through supporting capacity building and exchange of best practice among the EU Member States;
- A coordinator of social dialogue should be appointed in each relevant Directorates-General as a first practical step to increase awareness of the benefits of social dialogue within the EU institutions;
- The social partners should be involved in any relevant areas of legislation
- The special right of consultation of the social partners, as stated in Art. 154, must be respected by the Commission, the Council and Parliament;

Social dialogue is particularly important in times of crisis, which was proven most recently during COVID-19<sup>2</sup>. The social partners should also play a pivotal role in the twin transition, where reskilling and upskilling should be at the forefront.

We believe that social dialogue is equally important at the European level. At the European level we believe that the social partners play a critical role in the European social market economy. This role has the potential to be strengthened in the months and years to come, and the upcoming Commission initiative on strengthening social dialogue can play an important role towards this aim.

The European Social Partners need to be given the necessary room for manoeuvre. As representatives of workers, companies and employers, the social partners know the labour market conditions inside out. In addition, agreements by the social partners ensure the ownership of employees and employers and contribute to broadly supported policies in Europe. Models that work in practice lead to respect for

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<sup>1</sup> An example is the Main Agreement which is the framework for cooperation between the social partners in Denmark concluded by FH and DA.

<sup>2</sup> [Peak-level social dialogue and COVID-19: The European experience \(ilo.org\)](https://www.ilo.org/public/english/press/pr/2020/pr20200501.htm)

national models and ensures legitimacy and acceptance of EU policies at the Member State level. Therefore, social partners should be involved much closer in the European legislation. Here the European institutions play an essential role and the awareness of the benefits of social dialogue must be expanded within the European institutions.

Today's uncertainties and its consequences, including on the European labour market, makes our call for a genuine involvement of the social partners at national and European level even more topical. The social partners should be key players to find sustainable and pragmatic solutions to the critical issues of today and tomorrow. FH and DA are ready to play a positive role in the upcoming initiative on strengthening social dialogue in the European Union and remain at your disposal for any queries.