

Call for simplification and enforcement of the social acquis

A joint statement by Ceemet, EBF, HOTREC, and WEC-Europe

One year into the Commission's simplification agenda, Ceemet, EBF, HOTREC, and WEC-Europe reiterate their call for stronger efforts from European policymakers to streamline the social acquis and prioritise effective enforcement. This discussion is both timely and essential, aligning closely with the European Commission's own objective: to simplify EU rules so they function more effectively for people, businesses, and public administrations alike.

Over the past year, the second Von der Leyen Commission has placed simplification high on its list of priorities, and rightly so. Targeted digital efforts, such as eDeclaration, if implemented, show that well-designed tools can ease administrative burdens and create tangible benefits for companies. Yet, this remains an isolated example. The broader reality is unchanged. **The social acquis has grown to more than seventy pieces of legislation, developed at different times and under different political circumstances. The result is a framework that is ever more complex, fragmented and difficult to navigate: this framework does not fit today's challenges.**

Simplification is not the same as deregulation, and the distinction between the two is significant. The moment has come for a structured approach **that transforms simplification from an occasional exercise into a constant discipline.** Europe needs a routine system of reviewing existing rules, identifying redundant or overlapping provisions, focusing on implementation, and ensuring that new initiatives are designed with simplicity, coherence and usability in mind. This is not only a matter of reducing administrative burden. It is a matter of maintaining Europe's competitiveness, supporting cross-border activity and the Single Market, and enabling companies to focus on innovation and quality job creation rather than procedural obstacles.

The signatories identify concrete areas where simplification is both feasible and overdue. These include, for example, streamlined procedures for social security coordination, alignment of posting and notification requirements, and improved consistency across reporting and information obligations.

We want to emphasise that European employers have been contributing for decades to the social model in the EU. However, we underline that even the most carefully written legislation will fall short if its application across Member States remains uneven, inconsistent or unclear. Too often, the push for new legislation comes not because there is a legislative gap, but because the existing ones are not fully interpreted and enforced. Simplification, however, also requires that the Commission always carefully evaluates whether the existing acquis already covers the issues at stake, and refrains from proposing additional rules where that is verifiably the case. It is therefore of paramount importance to put more efforts and resources on the enforcement of the existing legislation at national level before considering introducing new rules.

Ceemet, EBF, HOTREC, and WEC-Europe stand ready to contribute constructively and ambitiously to this effort to simplify social legislation. The Commission has set the direction. The employers are prepared to help deliver results.



About co-signatories

Ceemet is the European employers' organisation representing the interests of the metal, engineering and technology-based (MET) industries with a particular focus on topics in the areas of employment, social affairs, industrial relations, health & safety and education & training. Ceemet members are national employers' federations across Europe and beyond based in 20 countries. They represent more than 200,000 member companies, a vast majority of which are SMEs. Ceemet members provide direct and indirect employment for 35 million people and cover all products within the MET industrial sectors.

EBF, the European Banking Federation is the voice of the European banking sector, bringing together national banking associations from across Europe. The federation is committed to a thriving European economy that is underpinned by a stable, secure, and inclusive financial ecosystem, and to a flourishing society where financing is available to fund the dreams of citizens, businesses and innovators everywhere.

HOTREC, the European association of hotels, restaurants, bars, and cafés – supports 2 million hospitality businesses, 9 out of 10 being micro-enterprises. HOTREC represents their 47 member associations from 36 countries towards the EU and international institutions. HOTREC acts as a platform of expertise and ensures a business-friendly and competitive environment while driving sustainable and innovative growth.

The World Employment Confederation Europe (WEC Europe) is the European division of the World Employment Confederation, representing the private employment services industry across Europe, representing 25 national federations and 9 workforce solutions companies from across Europe. Members of WEC-Europe represent a wide range of HR services, including agency work, direct recruitment, career management, Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) and Managed Service Provider (MSP).