

EN

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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(22.1.2026)

The Commission actions are guided by the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) which also promotes fair working conditions, the right to access early childhood education and care (ECEC) and timely access to affordable, preventive and curative healthcare of good quality.

Directive 2019/1152¹ sets out minimum requirements promoting transparent and predictable working conditions. Directive 2003/88² lays down minimum requirements for the protection of the health and safety of workers by regulating working time. Alongside the Work-life balance Directive³, these instruments reflect fair working conditions principles from the EPSR and rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights⁴.

The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child sets out a framework to protect the rights of all children, supported by the Council Recommendations establishing a European Child Guarantee⁵ and on Early Childhood Education and Care: Barcelona targets for 2030⁶ and the Commission Recommendation on integrated child protection systems⁷. While their implementation lies within the remit of national competences, the Commission supports it, including through funding⁸ and monitoring.

The Roadmap on Women's Rights⁹ promotes women's health, including antenatal care, sexual and reproductive health, respecting Member States' competence to organise their health systems. In line with the EPSR, the Commission supports the Member States including through the EU4Health programme¹⁰, and facilitating the exchange of good practices.

¹ Directive 2019/1152/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions, OJ L 186, 11.7.2019, p. 105–121. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1152/oj/eng>.

² Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, OJ L 299, 18.11.2003, p. 9. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/88/oj/eng>.

³ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1158/oj/eng>.

⁴ e.g. right to working conditions which respect health, safety and dignity, limitation of maximum working hours, rest periods and paid annual leave.

⁵ Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021 establishing a European Child Guarantee. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2021/1004/oj/eng>.

⁶ Council Recommendation 2022/C 484/01 of 8 December 2022 on early childhood education and care: the Barcelona targets for 2030. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022H1220\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022H1220(01)).

⁷ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/1238 of 23 April 2024 on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reco/2024/1238/oj/eng>.

⁸ e.g. European Social Fund Plus.

⁹ Communication COM/2025/97 final on A Roadmap for Women's Rights. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0097>.

¹⁰ Regulation 2021/522 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 March 2021 establishing a Programme for the Union's action in the field of health ('EU4Health Programme') for the period 2021-2027. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/522/oj/eng>.

The Commission helps address demographic challenges through these different initiatives and with a comprehensive approach, as outlined in the Demography Toolbox¹¹.

¹¹ Communication COM/2023/577 final on Demographic change in Europe: a toolbox for action. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023DC0577>.