

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002226/26
to the Commission
Loucas Furlas (PPE)
(2 June 2026)

Subject: Need to strengthen policies to eradicate poverty and social inequalities in the European Union

Despite the overall economic growth recorded in several Member States of the European Union, millions of European citizens continue to face serious social and economic difficulties. The increase in the cost of living, inflationary pressures, wage inequalities and the limited purchasing power of many households are intensifying the problem of poverty and social exclusion.

Of particular concern are the large disparities observed between Member States, but also within societies themselves, in terms of pay levels, access to decent work and living conditions. Social cohesion is a fundamental principle of the European Union and a key condition for maintaining citizens' trust in the European project.

Accordingly:

1. How does the Commission assess the current picture of poverty and social inequalities in the European Union?
2. What additional measures does the Commission intend to promote to reduce wage inequalities and protect the most vulnerable social groups?
3. Does the Commission consider that existing European policies are sufficient to achieve substantial social convergence between Member States?

Submitted: 2.6.2026

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Mînzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(29 July 2026)

1. The EU has committed to a 2030 target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million, including at least 5 million children ⁽¹⁾. Member States support this ambition through national poverty reduction targets. Progress has been made despite the series of crises in recent years: by 2025, the EU had recorded a decrease of 3.5 million compared to 2019, while the figure for children remained broadly stable ⁽²⁾. To step up the efforts, the Commission adopted the first-ever EU Anti-Poverty Strategy ⁽³⁾, which sets out the ambition to accelerate poverty reduction by 2030 and help eradicate poverty in the EU by 2050 through a comprehensive approach.

2. Within the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Commission proposes measures to tackle poverty, following a life-cycle perspective, and promotes the active inclusion approach, emphasising the importance of labour market integration and access to quality jobs for those who can work, access to essential goods and services and adequate income support. The Commission also committed to further action to promote better protection for vulnerable workers, including a Commission Recommendation on in-work poverty, and increased enforcement to ensure the directive on minimum wages is fully transposed ⁽⁴⁾.

3. Combating poverty is a collective responsibility and requires efforts at all levels, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Success will depend on the engagement of authorities at all levels of governance, of social partners, the civil society, the private sector as well as on the involvement of people experiencing poverty themselves. The strategy puts forward tools to support this engagement, such as the principles for effective anti-poverty policies ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ European Council Meeting 24 and 25 June 2021 — Conclusions <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50763/2425-06-21-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>.

⁽²⁾ The Staff Working Document (2026) 770 final presents a full assessment: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=comnat:SWD_2026_0770_FIN.

⁽³⁾ COM/2026/538 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52026DC0538&qid=1781192547404>.

⁽⁴⁾ Directive (EU) 2022/2041 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ%3AL%3A2022%3A275%3AFULL&uri=uriserv%3A0J.L_2022.275.01.0033.01.ENG.

⁽⁵⁾ Staff Working Document (2026) 771 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52026SC0771&qid=1781507185578>.