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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu
on behalf of the European Commission
(18.9.2026)

The Commission does not set national wage levels, unemployment benefits or defence budgets. Under the Treaties, these are primarily matters for Member States, while EU social legislation establishes minimum standards and supports social dialogue.

The Commission rejects any abuse of workers' rights. EU law requires Member States to ensure minimum protection on working time¹, transparent and predictable working conditions², work-life balance³, and adequate minimum wage frameworks⁴, in line with Directive 2003/88/EC, Directive (EU) 2019/1152, Directive (EU) 2019/1158 and Directive (EU) 2022/2041. These instruments are intended to improve workers' protection, not reduce it. Their application and enforcement, including in tourism and seasonal work, are the responsibility of national authorities, courts and labour inspectorates. Collective agreements must comply with applicable national and EU law. Any national measures or agreements must respect EU rules on daily and weekly rest, maximum working time and fair working conditions.

Regarding funding priorities, EU support for tourism or defence is grounded in distinct legal bases and serves different policy objectives decided by the co-legislators. The Commission encourages Member States to use available EU instruments, including the European Social Fund Plus, to support employment, education and skills, and healthy and well-adapted working environments that address health risks, including for seasonal workers.

¹ 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, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/88/oj>.

² Directive (EU) 2019/1152 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on transparent and predictable working conditions, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1152/oj>.

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>.

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/eli/dir/2022/2041/oj>.