



BUSINESSEUROPE



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European Social Partner's Statement on the Rule of Law

On 3 April 2019, the European Commission launched its Communication on “Further strengthening the Rule of Law within the Union. *State of Play and possible next steps*” (COM (2019) 163 final). It thereby invited the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council and the public at large to reflect on how strengthening the enforcement of the rule of law can make an essential contribution to the future of the European Union.

The European Social Partners fully agree that our democracies must be safeguarded and call on EU leaders to include the upholding of the rule of law in the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. They also stress their full commitment to supporting the rule of law as one of the foundations on which the European project and the democratic values it stands for are built.

The Rule of Law is essential for the proper functioning of the European Union, its institutions, its Single Market, labour market and society. It is an important guarantee for European citizens, employers and workers. The attractiveness of Europe as one of the best places to live, work and do business is highly dependent on a coherent and reliable application and enforcement of our common set of rules and values.

Member States joined the Union sharing the same commitment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and for the rule of law. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail. A sustainable Europe must improve the means of all public powers for reporting, monitoring and being accountable. This is necessary to win people's support.

The rule of law also requires effective, independent and impartial institutions (e.g. courts, inspection services and bodies) and mechanisms of redress so that these rights are justiciable and their legal protection can be ensured. The longstanding role of social partners in setting, applying and enforcing these rights, particularly through social dialogue and collective bargaining, should be fully recognised.

The European Social Partners therefore fully agree that the rule of law must be respected, better explained, promoted and applied across Europe. We remain fully committed to defending our common European rules and values and to speaking up for their protection across the continent through an enhanced dialogue with social partners and civil society at large.

We are willing to participate in appropriate social partners' consultations regarding the Communication and to support the European institutions in their efforts to strengthen the rule of law across Europe.