

## Response to EC call for evidence on strengthening EU sectoral social dialogue

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Contact person:	Danilo Gattullo, senior policy advisor, conduct of business	E-mail:	<a href="mailto:gattullo@insuranceeurope.eu">gattullo@insuranceeurope.eu</a>
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Insurance Europe believes that sectoral social dialogue is an important instrument which contributes towards the EU's objectives to achieve sustainable economic development and resilience in Europe. With their specific knowledge of each sector, sectoral social partners are closer to the needs of companies and employees and they are best placed to discuss and, where appropriate, develop solutions according to national law and practice. Sectoral social partners are also in a better position to deliver a concrete picture of each sector and can provide specific data that can be used in the design of policy proposals.

The Insurance Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (ISSDC) — of which Insurance Europe is an active member — has enabled social partners to address several issues of key relevance to employers and employees in the insurance sector, such as digitalisation, artificial intelligence and COVID-19.

European sectoral social dialogue will need to continue to play a strong role in the future. To facilitate this, the Commission should:

- **Improve the visibility and accessibility of sectoral social dialogue deliverables.** The outcomes of European social dialogue (such as process-oriented texts, joint opinions and tools) are only meaningful if they can be discussed, translated and used by national social partners. The European Commission should facilitate access to translation resources and improve the visibility of the outcomes of the sectoral social dialogue committees on their dedicated websites. The Commission and national authorities should substantially increase the visibility they give to joint outcomes of sectoral social dialogue, within and outside their institutions, and in the context of legislative and non-legislative processes.
- **Ensure that sectoral social dialogue has appropriate resources.** Budgets for sectoral social dialogue are being reduced and the administrative work to organise European social dialogue activities has been increasingly moved from the European Commission to the social partners. The Commission should review its approach to allow the social partners to focus on their core role in social dialogue.
- **Facilitate coordination between sectoral social dialogue committees.** Regular exchanges between sectors on common issues could benefit all social partners and help increase the weight given to the outcomes of social dialogue committees. The European Commission should further facilitate such cooperation while **ensuring the role and the autonomy of the individual sectoral social dialogues.**

- **Raise the profile of social dialogue within the EU and increase awareness of its importance.** In this regard, Insurance Europe agrees with the suggestion by Andrea Nahles, special advisor to Commissioner Schmit, that sectoral social partners should have greater involvement in the European Semester.
- **Improve consultation with social partners on Commission initiatives.** Insurance Europe believes that sectoral social partners should be involved in the EU's policymaking process at the earliest possible stage. While consultation with social partners works relatively well in employment and social policy, there is room for improvement in other policy areas. Insurance Europe welcomes the proposal by Andrea Nahles to appoint a social dialogue coordinator in each directorate-general. This would ensure a more consistent approach to consultation with social partners across the Commission.
- **Support capacity-building to benefit national social partners.** The capacities of national social partners vary substantially across Europe. In recent years, the European social partners have urged the EU to step up its financial support for capacity-building and have called on national governments to make better use of the available funding.

Insurance Europe is the European insurance and reinsurance federation. Through its 36 member bodies — the national insurance associations — it represents all types and sizes of insurance and reinsurance undertakings. Insurance Europe, which is based in Brussels, represents undertakings that account for around 95% of total European premium income. Insurance makes a major contribution to Europe's economic growth and development. European insurers pay out over €1 000bn annually — or €2.8bn a day — in claims, directly employ more than 920 000 people and invest over €10.6trn in the economy.