

## Joint Contribution to EU Quality Jobs Roadmap - EU Sectoral Social Partners in Industrial Cleaning Services

With this Statement, we jointly respond to the European Commission's Social Partner Consultation on the Quality Jobs Roadmap.

Our sector provides essential services to millions of European citizens that are fundamental for their health, security and wellbeing. They rely significantly on public clients, ranging from Critical Infrastructure to government facilities and public services such as healthcare and education.

### European Commission and Member States to promote Daytime Cleaning

The European Commission has a strategic opportunity to make daytime cleaning a flagship initiative within its forthcoming *Quality Jobs Roadmap*. Cleaning is a critical, yet often undervalued, part of Europe's essential services. Many cleaners—predominantly women, migrants, and older workers—face poor working time quality, low pay, and limited recognition. Daytime cleaning addresses these issues directly by providing more predictable schedules, visibility at work, and improved work-life balance, aligning clearly with Principles 5 and 10 of the European Pillar of Social Rights on fair working conditions and work-life balance.

A growing body of research and practice across Europe supports this transition. In France, the FARE PROPRETÉ study found that over 70% of office users support daytime cleaning. In Estonia, Helge Alt's research revealed that one client spent over €40,000 annually just to keep lights on at night for cleaning—an inefficiency that daytime cleaning can eliminate. Studies confirm that reduced absenteeism and lower turnover rates are clear benefits of daytime operations. These findings align with Eurofound's research on improving conditions in essential work and support broader goals of decent, sustainable employment in the post-pandemic economy.

The Commission should act by updating EU guidance on socially responsible public procurement. Clients like Kommunale Immobilien Jena and the University of Ghent have already demonstrated how to embed cleaner-friendly working hours into procurement, despite limitations in the current EU directives. A new EU-funded initiative, the European Daytime Cleaning Alliance, shows how cross-country collaboration among social partners—including in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Norway—can provide templates for sustainable rollout. The EU can further strengthen this momentum through the ELA (European Labour Authority) by recognising daytime cleaning as a means to reduce undeclared work and formalise employment.

Support from both trade unions and employers underscores the viability of this transition. The UNI Europa–EFCI joint statement and projects such as Germany's BIV–IG BAU collaboration and Norway's Clean Awareness project provide strong models. The Commission should channel ESF+, Horizon Europe, and Recovery & Resilience Facility funding into pilot schemes, training programs, and feasibility assessments.

Finally, daytime cleaning offers the Commission a tangible way to define quality jobs in low-wage, essential sectors. Like the *EU Quality Framework for Traineeships*, it sets a precedent for establishing minimum standards—this time for working time and job dignity. With the 2023 Belgian Presidency having made quality jobs a central theme, and Members of the European Parliament already calling on President Roberta Metsola to support daytime cleaning in the European Parliament, the political and policy groundwork is in place. The Commission must now lead the way—ensuring that cleaners are no longer invisible, but instead part of a new European standard for decent, quality work.

## European Commission to advance socially responsible public procurement reform

In our view, the current the Public Procurement Directives hinders the implementation of EU strategic goals such as socially lawful and responsible procurement, and above all, the advancement of quality jobs. Extensive data and research from the EU institutions and their agencies show that public procurement is mainly price-driven. It can be estimated that at least two thirds of public contracts in the EU do not have any social aspects – which weakens Collective Bargaining and incentivises a race to the bottom in working conditions and quality in essential services provided to European citizens.

We see legal uncertainty created in Art. 18.2, 67 and 72 as root causes for this problem and call for legal action that simplifies the current legal framework while effectively promoting socially lawful and responsible public procurement. Concretely, we recommend:

1. **Revise and clarify the mandatory social clause**, by explicitly stating that Collective Agreements can never be considered a discriminatory measure in public contracts and that Member States must fight abnormally low tenders and ensure that contractors comply with applicable labour law and **Collective Agreements (according to national law and practices in industrial relations, e.g. concluded by the representative trade union and employer organisations, or generally applicable Collective Agreements, where they exist)** as mandatory selection criteria for cleaning services in Articles 18.2 and 67. The Article leaves it however to the discretion of national law to define “adequate measures” and does not provide legal certainty in its implementation – making it possible for public buyers to award contracts based on the cheapest offer only and to ignore Collective Agreements, facilitating abnormally low tenders.
2. **Provide in Article 67 legal certainty for public buyers on awarding contracts based on quality criteria.** It currently only recommends the consideration of social aspects with a link to the subject matter of the contract – without clarifying the latter. As a consequence, it allows that any social criteria can be judged as not linked to the subject matter of the tender and therefore do not qualify as an applicable award criterion. The use and correct implementation of socially responsible procurement requires therefore the willingness and confidence from the contracting authorities to use quality awarding criteria. This needs to be fixed.
3. **Establish in Article 72 legal certainty for price revisions tied to changes in Collective Agreements, labour and fiscal law, and annual inflation rates above the 2% target of the ECB.** The current absence of legal certainty threatens the financial sustainability of our sectors, impacting working conditions for essential workers and the quality of essential services.