



*Employers entrusted to deliver
Sustainability Growth Innovation*

Policy Kit

with regard to the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU

1 January 2021 – 30 June 2021

SGI Europe (CEEP, the European Centre of employers and enterprises providing public services and services of general interest, until December 2020), represents employers and enterprises providing public services and services of general interest, since 1961. Our members are organisations active in fields such as:

- Central & local administrations,
- Healthcare,
- Education,
- Housing,
- Waste management,
- Energy,
- Transport,
- Water,
- Environment,
- Communications.

Modern public services and services of general interest (SGIs) support the fundamental goals of the EU, enabling business, cohesion, economic and social solidarity, and a better quality of life for citizens.

This Policy Kit, prepared considering the priorities of the Portuguese presidency of the European Union, aims at presenting key SGI Europe positions on the main files to be discussed at EU level for the next 6 months.

Resilient Europe

European Economic and Monetary Union

- The EMU should support a European economy that is modern, sustainable, socially just and globally competitive. Structural improvements to the EMU should make the Eurozone more robust in the event of future shocks and support related policies such as the European Pillar for Social Rights.
- Following the financial and economic crisis, progress on the EMU architecture should be our first common objective. The Banking Union must be completed if it is to deliver its full potential in making the EMU more stable and resilient to shocks, whilst limiting the need for public risk sharing.
- SGI Europe believes that a macroeconomic stabilisation function at euro area level could potentially complement automatic stabilisers at national level under certain conditions. It should take the form of automatic stabilisation and not aim at a fiscal fine-tuning of the economic cycle. The stabilisation function would therefore not be a tool to actively steer the euro area fiscal stance, but rather to reduce the need for euro area countries to address large country-specific shocks by using discretionary policies.
- Social Partners involvement allows for legitimacy, fairness, and democratic accountability of reforms. However, this involvement cannot happen without ensuring that enough support is provided for capacity building of social partner organisations.
- Long-term social investment is needed, especially in regions at the lower end of the diverging economies, and it should benefit people on lower incomes in the interest of promoting upward convergence.

More: [Opinion on the Reflection paper on the future the EMU](#)

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SME Policy

- The current definition of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) under European law is based on the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC, which has subsequently been embedded in EU binding law by being included in the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014.
- Under this legal framework, SMEs that are mainly or entirely owned by public authorities do not fall under the European definition of an SME. This non recognition has negative consequences on:
 - their access to financing opportunities, by limiting the scope of funding and financial programmes available to them; and
 - their right to benefit from administrative simplification measures, leading to distorted conditions of competition for public SMEs.

- SGI Europe therefore considers that private and public SMEs are not accorded equal treatment. In fact, this definition contradicts the principles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union by creating discrimination between enterprises, based on the ownership criteria.
- This situation particularly affects Local Public Services Enterprises (LPSEs), by restricting their ability to fulfil their mission of general interest as public services and services of general interest providers. Given their strategic role in the European territories, these public SMEs need to be supported, particularly in the context of economic recovery following the Covid-19 related crisis.

More: [Opinion "Rethinking the SME Definition"](#)

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Rule of law

- SGI Europe and the EU Social Partners highlight that our democracies must be safeguarded, stressing our 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, the labour market and society as a whole. 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 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 accountability. 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 is 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 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.

More: [European Social Partner's Statement on the Rule of Law](#)

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Migration

- On 7 September 2020, the European Commission and the European Social and Economic Partners (including SGI Europe) renewed their commitment to the European Partnership for Integration. In this framework, SGI Europe contributed to the [New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), which further highlights the importance of the renewed EU Partnership for Integration with social and economic partners.
- Migrants and refugees make up a significant part of the EU's workforce. Their essential contribution to European economies and public services became abundantly clear during the COVID-19 crisis, with many providing crucial health and social support. Building a strategic approach on migration through cooperation and networks with third countries for coordinating the attraction of talents might significantly improve the employment opportunities both for employers and for the migrants, with potential benefits for all skill levels.

- Following the crisis, migrant workers and entrepreneurs can play an important role in the recovery and rebuilding of EU economies, as countries work towards prosperity and social cohesion. Many of these workers face specific challenges, however, and have been severely affected by the pandemic. Improving the systems to recognize professional qualifications and validate professional skills acquired in third countries remains essential.
- SGI Europe and its members closely work with a large variety of stakeholders at the local and national level to provide affordable and accessible public services such as healthcare and housing, whose crucial role in promoting migrants' social inclusion is emphasized in the New Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027.
- It is to mitigate these difficulties that the European Commission and European Social and Economic Partners have renewed their commitment to the Partnership, in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Partnership reaffirms the importance of a multilevel, cross-sectoral approach for early integration into the labour market, benefiting both refugees and the economy and society at large.

More: [European Partnership for Integration offering opportunities for refugees to integrate into the Labour Market](#) and [Renewal of the European Partnership for Integration](#)

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Conference on the Future of Europe

- SGI Europe welcomes the joint ambition of the European Parliament and of the European Commission to organise a broad and far-reaching Conference on the Future of Europe. Building up on the record participation at the 2019 EU elections, this conference should further give back ownership and trust about the EU project to citizens by involving them directly.
- Only a genuine inter-institutional approach, involving all institutions, consultative bodies, social partners and the civil society across Europe, could fulfil the ambitions and expectations put in this initiative. The Conference on the Future of Europe should not be an exercise 'by the EU Bubble for the EU Bubble'.
- SGI Europe will closely monitor the upcoming discussions setting up the format and organisation of the conference. With our representativity and the mandate it brings us, social partners have a legitimate place in the conference.
- We call on the genuine and proper participation of social partners in the governance of the conference, as well as in the events organised in this context at national, regional and local levels.

More: [The Conference on the Future of Europe needs the genuine involvement of social partners to be meaningful](#)

Green Europe

EU Green Deal

- SGI Europe members are committed to developing a balanced and sustainable strategy relying on the economic, social and environmental development. Indeed, it will be essential to take these three dimensions into account for the Green Deal to reach its objectives for 2050.
- SGI Europe welcomes the first-ever EU Climate Law, and the calls for ensuring all EU policies contribute to the European Green Deal objectives for a net-zero emission target.
- SGI Europe positively receives the European Commission's recognition to promote more and direct investments for sustainable technology, research and innovations and welcomes the new Sustainable Europe Investment Plan (SEIP) including its social transition finance plans published in the Just Transition Mechanism and Just Transition Fund.
- SGI Europe welcomes the new European Climate Pact and underlines the importance of social inclusion, since there cannot be a transition without acceptance of society. At the same time, the Green Deal must

be inclusive and avoid social divides. SGI Europe supports the continued effort on re-skilling and up-skilling our society to make this climate transition a success.

- SGI Europe welcomes the recognition of digitalisation as an important driver in this climate transition and considers the digital sector as part of the solution to achieve the sustainability goals in the Green Deal. In parallel we emphasise the need to also include not only new technological advantages but also behavioural or regulatory innovations to improve energy efficiency, water usage, transport and waste management.
- SGI Europe welcomes the extension of the Emission Trading System (ETS) also to the transport and building sectors. However, SGI Europe calls for an alignment of the ETS Directive as well as a development of an adequate carbon pricing.
- SGI Europe recognises that despite the efforts made, the first environmental damages are being witnessed and there is a need for an adaptation strategy that goes beyond the reduction of CO2 emissions. We have therefore welcomed with great enthusiasm the intentions to introduce a new Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and a Zero-Pollution Action Plan.

More: [Opinion on the EU Green Deal – Working Together on a Sustainable Path](#)

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EU Taxonomy

- SGI Europe welcomes the Commission's determination to continue the process with the EU Taxonomy, aiming to finance the transition to a climate-neutral Europe by 2050. SGI Europe is very supportive in setting the right framework to redirect capital flows towards sustainable economic activities. A sustainable finance mechanism and the Taxonomy Regulation can enable the objectives of the EU Green Deal.
- It is essential that this framework is guided by common principles that safeguard similar levels of ambition across various sectors and aims for a technology-neutral approach and respects the role of public undertakings. It will also be important to ensure that the EU Taxonomy takes into account the maturity of the technologies and their contributions in reducing CO2 emissions.
- The EU Taxonomy also needs to fully take into account the current national and EU legislations. The key element should be to simplify the process and make sustainable and resilient projects more attractive.
- Regarding the 'Do No Significant Harm' (DNSH) assessment, the proportionality principle should prevail, in accordance with risk management practices. SGI Europe finds it difficult to see how the proportionality principle may be applied in practice and asks to reassess this criterion as well as provide concrete guidance on the implementation of the principle. In this regard, The European Securities and Markets Authority's (ESMA) recommendation that the Commission develops a methodology to allow a sector-coefficient to be assigned for smaller entities is an avenue that should be explored. Furthermore, the EU Commission should provide more clarity and support for the application of the taxonomy.
- SGI Europe fears that service providers and investors may lose the needed interest if the information burden is too onerous and opt for traditional funding requiring less disclosure. Ultimately, the sustainable finance market rests on the availability of eligible assets. Therefore, the way the EU Taxonomy is designed risks undermining investments in sustainable and resilient projects and additionally slowing down its harmonisation with other sustainable investment strategies i.e the EU Green Bond Standards.
- From SGI Europe's point of view, due to its high complexity and its timeline of implementation, a gradual implementation of the Taxonomy would bring about a considerable increase in market successful implementation and acceptance and thus reorient private funds more quickly into sustainable economic activities. For instance, it should be made clear that the disclosure requirements deriving from Article 8 of the Taxonomy Regulation will only become mandatory for financial years beginning after 1 January 2022.

More: [Input to the EU classification system for Green Investments \(Taxonomy Regulation\)](#)

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Decarbonisation

Public transport

- SGI Europe welcomes the recognition by the “Year of Rail 2021” of rail as a sustainable mode of transport that needs more support. SGI Europe believes that the proposal neglects to address the benefits of public transport, which is similarly important as rail for a successful modal shift.
- The transport sector is responsible for almost 25% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Europe. Public transport is a good alternative with low or reduced CO₂ emissions. This highlights the need to include public transport in a successful modal shift campaign which comprises rail services as suggested by the “Year of Rail 2021”, but which goes beyond by including trams, metros and (E-/H₂)-Busses.

More: [Statement on European Year of Rail 2021](#)

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Energy

- SGI Europe calls for a holistic approach in which electrification, decarbonised and renewable gases and innovative heating/cooling, industry and transport solutions with their respective infrastructures have a role to play. There is not one technology or application that is going to solve all our problems: increasing cross-sectoral cooperation will unleash the true potential in all sectors/applications.
- Existing gas network operators have a clear expertise that must be used for the introduction of hydrogen in present networks and for the construction and operation of hydrogen networks. This is a key element for the introduction of an EU-wide framework for decarbonized and renewable gases in the gas directive that can accelerate the establishment of a European market for these gases.
- Flexibility of energy systems is key to accommodate the growing intermittency of renewables, and what is really lacking is the possibility for all sources of flexibility of all energies to compete on a level playing field.
- To enable decarbonised and renewable gases to make their contribution to achieving climate neutrality by 2050, the course must now be set at EU level. First and foremost, it is essential to have a clear commitment and strategic view from the EU on gas and the integration and use of renewable and decarbonized gases in the internal market and the grids taking into account their potential and constraints.
- Finally, SGI Europe would like to underline that the Smart Sector Integration Strategy must also give large room to district heating and cooling which is a sector integration technology, thermal storage and are key for circular economy by recycling waste.

More: [Response to the Zero Pollution Roadmap](#)

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Circular Economy

- The primary focus of the EU approach to circular economy should be put on waste prevention and on supporting Member States who risk failing recycling and waste prevention obligations.
- In order to enhance a proper waste prevention at source, producers need to implement sustainability principles in product design.
- Supply and demand for secondary raw materials are essential for the development of circular economy and should be strengthened. For this aim, both legislative and economic measures must be applied to support the development of a solid market for the secondary raw materials. An effective system of development for end of waste criteria at EU-level should be considered, along with new requirements for recycled content for proper product categories.
- More support for recycling methods in building infrastructures and adequate binding targets are needed, such as fostering large-scale European experimentation in low-carbon construction and refurbishment systems that comply with the principles of recycling and draw up the new applicable rules.

- Better linkage with the EU digital strategy can provide multiple innovative solutions and pathways for the transition to a circular economy for the waste, waste-water and energy sector.
- Waste-to-energy must be part of a sustainable circular economy, as it is needed to implement the landfill ban, as a sink for hazardous substances, as a renewable energy resource and to recover valuable secondary raw materials.
- The enforcement of the waste hierarchy in every Member State must be prioritised in order to reach the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. For the waste sector, the aim must be to end landfilling of untreated municipal waste already by 2030.

More: [Opinion on the Circular Economy Action Plan](#)

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Water

- SGI Europe welcomes the initiative on a Zero Pollution action plan and its objectives to prevent, remedy, monitor and report on pollution. We particularly welcome the aim to tackle the pollution on the water, soil and air scale in a holistic approach to avoid and reduce pollution at the source, taking into account the precautionary and polluter pays principle.
- A prerequisite for systematic protection of the environment and water resources is the coherence of European legal acts. In order to strengthen the good status of the environment, especially water and soil, it is essential that measures in other sectors are also geared towards the corresponding environmental protection goals. SGI Europe is therefore highly stressing the planned interlinking of the different EU environmental policy fields. This is the only way to make a sustainable and systematic contribution to improve their quality.
- SGI Europe asks that all existing and future EU Green Deal initiatives that contribute to the zero emissions target must be measured against the target of reduction at the source first. This means taking into account the challenges of climate change, air and soil pollution, micropollutants, pharmaceuticals, persistent substances (such as PFAS) and other emerging pollutants, by reducing pollution at source and consequently implementing the precautionary and polluter pays principle and ensuring it becomes part of the solution to reach the set goals of the EU Green Deal.
- In coherence with the EU Green Deal's objectives, SGI Europe calls for a strong link and harmonisation with EU water policy such as the Water Framework Directive and its daughter directives, the Drinking Water Directive as well as with REACH, which is needed for a holistic approach. Additionally, the action plan should address the reduction of Substances of potential Very High Concern (SVHCs) in an intercompartmental approach within an integrating framework at EU level to avoid shifting one environment compartment to another.
- SGI Europe also calls for building synergies with the evaluation of the Urban Waste-Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) and the Sludge Directive for a coherent policy framework under the new Zero Pollution and the EU Green Deal. The aim for a targeted reduction of trace substances in water bodies should always refer to the quality and management objectives pursued for the entire river area. The precautionary and polluter-pays principle at source must have priority over other reduction measures.

More: [Position Paper on the Water Framework Directive](#), [Position Paper on the Sludge Directive](#) and [Position Paper on the Zero Pollution Action Plan](#)

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Digital Europe

EU Digitalisation and Data Policy

- Few foreign digital companies are currently dominating the digital economy. Data confidentiality, digital sovereignty and technological and economic independence must be guaranteed and protected in the EU's present and developing cloud computing market. European legislation should therefore make sure that EU citizens, businesses and public authorities are free to choose a provider that allows them to evolve in a self-determined manner and prevent inhibitory effects such as vendor lock-in whilst respecting European values.
- It is therefore necessary to define in a transversal way what is meant by this term “platform”, which can go as far as covering activities such as Internet access providers, pure hosting (and similar cloud services), or online intermediation services. Therefore, the definition of intermediaries should be modernized ensuring a clear distinction between passive and active online intermediaries.
- Whenever platforms engage in the distribution of content, organise or moderate content, there is a need for effective safeguards to protect the general interest, fundamental rights and European values. Platforms should have clear responsibilities, when taking content-related decisions, to protect and support freedom of expression and information.
- Online platforms have become popular, largely because it seems that they offer innovative services at none or low monetary costs. However, the dependence on these gatekeeper platforms comes at a price. In particular, the use of algorithms and AI systems should therefore be subject to clear standards and transparency requirements. Similarly, access to platforms' data should be made available to academia to facilitate independent assessments of algorithms used. Regarding algorithm-based categorisation of persons or population groups, discriminatory distortions have regularly been proven. The distortions apply to a wide range of applications such as facial recognition, crime prevention, language analysis, university admissions and advertising. This is because the algorithms behind these applications are not always subject to general interest and rarely subject to public control.

More: [Opinion on EU Digitalisation and Data Policy](#)

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Skills and Education

- Whilst the EU needs to address the fallout of the COVID-19 crisis and prepare for the green and digital transition, SGI Europe welcomed the European Commission proposals which kept the long-term perspective in mind. The proposed Skills agenda for Europe should now be fully implemented and properly connected to the other initiatives such as the EU Green Deal, the digital industrial strategy, and the Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- With its focus on “Strengthening skills intelligence”, the European Commission rightly provided pathways to address skills mismatch and shortages. The existing articulations between the labour market and education and training programmes are currently insufficient. Developing a common understanding of future skills needs should help to address the shortages experienced in essential utilities such as transport, waste management, water, energy, or housing.
- SGI Europe welcomes the steps taken to guarantee structural funds and establish pan-EU initiatives and programmes focused on equipping citizens with the skills they need.

- Social partners have a central role to play in developing education and training. Social partners should have the possibility to be more actively involved in the design and implementation of VET curricula. Social partners are the best-placed to assess what skills are needed on labour markets. Better cooperation between sectors could help individuals in their career planning, facilitate mobility and contribute to the development of an overall educational strategy.

More: [Comments on the Update of the Skills Agenda for Europe \(joint with EFEE\)](#)

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Social Europe

European Pillar of Social Rights

- The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) is an important shared political commitment which can be a reference to guide our actions and policy choices. The full respect of the limits imposed to EU action and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality is imperative.
- Seen the different models of labour market and delivery of SGI in the EU, the responsibility of the implementation of the EPSR at national, regional, and local levels must be kept in mind. SGI Europe deems vital to recall that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to achieve our objectives for a fair, sustainable and inclusive society.
- We welcome the broad discussion started by the European Commission with Member States, regions, and national social partners. Instead of engaging in new legislation, the EPSR should be about fostering national ownership of the principles via the European Semester and guidance for the use of EU funds.
- SGI Europe wants the future Action Plan on the EPSR to foster ownership at national level and materialise the vision of a Social Europe relying on social dialogue and essential services, long-term care, healthcare, and housing.
- The COVID-19 crisis should serve as a reminder on how crucial the provision of public services and SGIs is to the well-being of EU citizens, as well as for the overall economic resilience of the EU. The future Action Plan should contribute to this realisation.
- The Pillar identified the importance of public services and Services of General Interest and Economic Interest under in the framework of Protocol 26 – i.e. quality, safety, affordability, equal treatment, universal access, and user's rights. The Action Plan should now emphasise the considerations of quality, and particularly affordability and equality of access for all households and groups also in terms of accessibility for persons with disabilities and in terms of geographical coverage.
- Housing is one of the principles of the Pillar, and we know that approximately 11% of the EU population spends more than 40% of disposable income on housing, whilst the European Semester has identified housing cost overburden as a "social trend to watch."
- The COVID-19 pandemic also had a tremendous impact on the provision of health and social care services in Europe. This is adding to the already existing challenges of the healthcare system such as years of underinvestment, recruitment and retention and demographic ageing.

More: [Response to Public Consultation on the Action Plan for the EU Pillar of Social Rights](#)

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Minimum Wages

- SGI Europe believes that future EU action to address the challenges related to fair minimum wages should not seek to directly harmonise the level of minimum wages across the EU, nor to establish a uniform mechanism to set minimum wages or the level of pay which falls within the contractual freedom of the Social Partners and remit of Member States' authorities.

- SGI Europe deems crucial to state that any European action must first recognise the fact that no two Member States are identical with respect to labour market institutions that influence how minimum wages are determined, implemented, adjusted, and monitored.
- SGI Europe believes that the scope of the EU initiative should be directed at reducing the number of workers paid at minimum wage levels and increasing their take-home pay and opportunities to move into higher-paying jobs, by addressing, amongst others, the design of tax-benefit systems supporting the income of low-wage workers, education or training and upskilling policies and active labour market policies (ALMPs) to support labour market transitions.
- SGI Europe believes that an EU minimum wage action might not address the needs and specificities of each Member State and, depending on the design of the initiative, SGI Europe is also concerned that a minimum wage proposal at EU level could potentially erode the autonomy of existing national or local labour market institutions.

More: [Response to the open consultation on the Minimum Wage Directive Proposal](#)

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Gender Equality

- SGI Europe wants to emphasise that there is a strong European legal framework providing women and men with the right to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. There is no need to amend the current European legislation or to introduce new instruments. It is better to focus on the full and comprehensive implementation of existing regulation at national level.
- Further progress in some cases might be needed when it comes to the application of the legislative framework. To tackle the gender pay gap, the Commission can continue to monitor Member States compliance with the equal pay principle in the context of the annual European Semester exercise.
- Collective bargaining, practical tools such as guidelines and information, exchange of good practice and gender disaggregated statistics are ways to raise awareness and to tackle the gap.
- The gender pay gap has multifaceted underlying causes which must be addressed in order to eliminate the barriers women face to their full and equal participation in the labour market. It is important to tackle the gender pay gap through specific actions and gender mainstreaming simultaneously, to use the dual approach. One must also look further than just wage setting and acknowledge the interconnection between working and living conditions.
- A way forward to meet the gender equality challenges would be to take a holistic approach: tackling gender norms, gender stereotypes, educational, professional and career choices, opportunities for parental leave and the sharing of caring and unpaid domestic activities, access to childcare and other care services are aspects that influence both women's and men's situation in the labour market. These aspects must be taken into consideration when analysing, as well as addressing, the gender pay gap.

More: [Response to the consultation with social partners on pay transparency](#)

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Global Europe

- The EU has the potential of a worldwide standard-setter in trade policy by combining the necessary economic weight with a long tradition of values. The EU must commit to promoting a balanced, multilateral, and sustainable rules-based international order.
- External trade can stimulate the needed inclusive and environment-friendly economic growth and help level the playing field with other regions of the world. The contribution of public services and services of general interest in providing citizens with a decent lifestyle cannot be over-stressed.
- SGI Europe presents the following recommendations:
 - The EU should follow a strategic and harmonised approach combining trade policy with other relevant policies such as environmental, competition or economic goals.
 - The EU should recognise legislative provisions for SGIs. SGIs provide citizens with accessible and qualitative services, serve as safety nets, and strengthen social cohesion. They also promote an entrepreneurship-friendly climate that fosters the development of metropolitan regions.
 - The EU trade political agenda should push forward ambitious social and environmental criteria, through including Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapters in trade agreements.

More: [Opinion on the Reflection paper 'Harnessing globalisation': The EU in a Globalised World](#); [Opinion on Brexit, Trade and SGIs "Reflection on Brexit and trade: possible options"](#)

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SGI Europe ongoing projects

Involving SGIs in the European Semester

- Public services' employers and SGI providers are essential actors of the European economy. They contribute to the competitiveness of the European economy and to social cohesion by connecting territories and providing key services to enterprises. The EU economic governance and the process of the European Semester have become a framework within which SGI Europe members can make active contributions to the content of the AGS, Country reports and CSRs. However, not all SGI Europe members have the capacity or knowledge to respond in due time to the various consultations EU social partners have access to.
- SGI Europe and the three project partners, SALAR, UDES and UNISOC, intend to correct this situation and design tools and methods of consultation to increase the quality of the input from the public services' employers and SGI providers to the European Semester. For this to happen, the financial resources provided by the European Commission will be used to create a structured involvement of SGI providers at the milestones of the Semester – Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy, Country Reports and Country Specific Recommendations – whilst further enhancing SGI Europe coordination capacities.

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Green Skills in VET

- SGI Europe and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) will combine their respective expertise as public service providers and education providers, and undertake a research into current and future skills and training needs of employers of 3 key sectors (water, transport and energy), which would be affected by the green transition, and how education providers can support them.
- The project will target six Member States with the following specific objectives:
 - Identifying the current/future demands for skills/jobs in key public services and SGI sectors, as well as singling out any mismatch between skills needs and learning provision.

- Promoting and sharing teaching and training methods between the education and training supply and the public services in order to align these two sectors as much as possible.
- The continuous professional development of teaching and training staff to coincide with these new green skills will prove pivotal to the achievement of the targets set by the European Green Deal.
- Designing solutions for enterprises, and education providers, to adapt skills delivery in the context of a framework of collaboration between education and public services' providers.
- Disseminating/raising awareness of green skills needs, and addressing which sectors rely on and will be impacted by them the most.

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