

I, Maurice Fitzgerald, [REDACTED], make the following submission in relation to a EU directive on minimum wages:

It would have been helpful if this consultation had a basic questions and answers section which allowed for an extra comments and observations section.

As Follows:

A decent standard of living is a vague concept, but essentially would have to be far above basic welfare entitlements, which only provide an existence coupled with a high level of social exclusion. It would also mean being able to build a house, which only the elite are able to do. A decent standard of living would also mean enough time off to enjoy the fruits of labour, rather than a live-to work culture and workaholic-ism which Ireland is infamous for.

There is a conceit and cynicism to this consultation in dealing with those who are "in work", rather than those who are not. The consultation fails to deal with the big picture of welfare-ism and the lack of opportunity. Trying to raise the standard of living for those in in-work poverty, does not look at the bigger issue of fairness of opportunity which is at the heart of low pay problems and unemployment. Social Injustice is a cancer which is getting worse and more pervasive.

The use of the term social partners appears to refer or imply the Union movement. A movement which represents those who are members of unions, but neglects those who are not. The social partners may be doing more harm than good in promoting their own interests. There is a link between low wages and those who are not members of unions.

Setting a minimum wage does reduce exploitation, but in the long run, and ironically, becomes the maximum wage because employers feel this is all they have to pay and it becomes the maximum wage paid indefinitely to employees.

Capitalistic economic models across the EU will ensure that the social gap gets wider and wider with welfare budgets soaring, unless more people are given decent opportunities. Decent opportunities equal a decent standard of living.