

## **Tripartite Social Summit**

**19 March 2025**

### **Speech by Nanna Højlund, First Vice President of the Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH)**

Dear President of the Commission, Ministers, Commissioners, and representatives of the social partners,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about something as important as making the EU a competitive region where not only jobs are created, but good, high-quality jobs.

The current geopolitical situation makes it necessary to strengthen the competitiveness of our businesses to ensure sustainable economic growth and stability in Europe.

To maintain and enhance Europe's competitiveness, we must focus on creating jobs that not only drive growth but also offer good wages and working conditions. The EU **cannot** and **should** not compete with the rest of the world by lowering wages or social protection levels.

As we have said many times before – free movement should not only be free, but first and foremost fair.

We have plenty of people in the EU whose talents can flourish for the common good if we invest in them. That is why we must prioritize lifelong learning and upskilling so that everyone can contribute to a strong and competitive Europe.

There is a strong focus these days on the regulatory burdens that make life difficult for our businesses. We agree that we need to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens on our businesses. But let me be absolutely clear: this must not come at the expense of workers' rights, health, or safety.

We need EU legislation that ensures the protection of workers, and at the same time respects national model. And the best way to achieve this balance is to actively involve the social partners in the shaping of the legislation.

Therefore, I am pleased that the social partners on EU level and the Commission have signed a pact and committed themselves to promote social dialogue and to take responsibility for finding effective solutions that foster both growth and security.

In Denmark, we have good experiences with the social partners playing a central role in the development of education programs. We work together to ensure that the skills of the workers, match labor market needs. Together we have created a labor market model that combines high competitiveness with strong social protection. A model that offers both flexibility for businesses and security for employees. It is a model that works and a model that we cherish.

I would like to extend my thanks to the Minister for Employment and the Confederation of Danish Employers for the constructive collaboration.

As a dedicated and committed affiliate of ETUC, we will in FH – together with the rest of the European trade union family - continue the work ahead to protect and improve workers' rights and to contribute to European competitiveness.

Let us together make Europe a place where businesses invest, innovation flourishes, and where working conditions are fair and decent.

Thank you for your attention.