

MJR DISCUSSES EU FUTURE AND SOCIAL RIGHTS IN PRAGUE

On 24 February 2017 MJR was the special guest at the Czech Republic's "National Convention on the EU" – a roundtable discussion among government representatives, social partners, civil society and academic experts – on the topic of the European Pillar of Social Rights. MJR presented the main messages of her report, recently approved by the European Parliament, and stressed that updated social standards need to go hand in hand with investments that support faster economic convergence among EU Member States.

Before the roundtable session, MJR had a working breakfast with Tomáš Prouza, Czech Secretary of State for EU Affairs, on the preparations of the Rome summit, priorities for a common future as EU27 and key aspects of the EU's economic and social agenda, including rules on the posting of workers. MJR and State Secretary Prouza strongly agreed that the roadmap for the future of the EU27 needs to include ambitious action for greater economic and social convergence, so that European integration remains a win-win process for all participants and the Single Market brings tangible improvements in Europeans' living and working conditions.

MJR then had the opportunity to learn more about social dialogue and wage developments in the Czech Republic over a working lunch with Mr Josef Středula, leader of the Czech-Moravian Trade Union Confederation. She was impressed by the trade unions' thinking ahead on how to adapt labour market rules and the financing of the welfare state to new trends such as digitalisation and robotisation. Faced with the rise of an "Industry 4.0", the European Pillar of Social Rights is a key European initiative to achieve a harmonious "Society 4.0" with high productivity, broadly shared prosperity, good work-life balance and equal opportunities for all people. MJR also strongly supported the Czech trade unions' campaign to #EndCheapLabour and upgrade the Czech economic model towards activities with higher added value.