



EUCDW Annual Report 2005

Introduction

For the EUCDW, 2005 was the year of our 9th Congress, which took place at the Vienna Hotel Strudlhof from 2 to 4 September 2005. The Congress dealt with the fundamental topics of poverty, environmental degradation, social segregation, the promise of the pure market economy to solve our problems, and reality. In a debate on principles it was discussed whether the ideology of the **pure market economy** - in its sole concentration on the freedom of the entrepreneur - fails to see that, in a society with a certain degree of social cohesiveness, there is also the need for respecting the freedoms and rights of the others: the less efficient, the sick and the elderly persons, the youths and the children. Social protection and social integration is required to ensure the freedom of these people. This was the background of the Congress with its motto "For a Europe of Social Market Economy".

The European social model is based on 3 principles: freedom, solidarity and - her sister - subsidiarity. **Freedom** refers to the individual as a responsible human being. He must be given the free choice to pursuit a good life, while this must go together with a concept of freedom that is not restricted to pure individualism, but also includes responsibility for the whole of society.

This is our concept of freedom: Both - the individual person and his social nature - and it is in this area of conflict that every individual has to find his way within the community, while bearing in mind the common welfare. The **principles of solidarity and subsidiarity** are essential tools to achieve this.

As we debate on "social market economy" in this context, we are convinced that every individual should be free in his decision whether or not to use the opportunities of the market. In fact, the market is the most efficient economic system when using scarce resources with the aim of obtaining a maximum benefit.

However, the unregulated market devours itself. The unregulated market is the jungle or Manchester liberalism - whatever you want to call it. Therefore it is essential to establish framework conditions. Starting from the model of freedom of the Catholic social teaching, "to seize opportunities" just means "to seize opportunities within certain limits". Certainly, the scope of these limits is a frequent matter of debate.

At times re-orientation will be necessary. In times of economic expansion, it is easier to upgrade social protection than in periods of economic downturn and unemployment. Then one should rather focus on job creation and promotion of economic growth. The respective decision about priorities is always taken in a specific situation. Nonetheless one thing is clear: Within the limits set, the market has to yield its full benefits.

Out of fear of socialism and communism, important social achievements have been made. Since this fear has ceased to exist, some things are no longer valid. However, it is unacceptable that a well-balanced social policy with regard to legislation and collective agreements should only be possible in the face of fear. Instead, we should act so out of an inner conviction, to the benefit of the people - whether wage earners or employers -, discussing the details, not the principle.

Solidarity also refers to the question of how workers can help themselves. The weak members of society need help. The European Union tries to achieve this by

establishing framework conditions for the internal market at European level, wherever this seems reasonable. This is another point that requires continuous watchfulness and discussion.

Not least because of this, progress on the Constitution is so important. It is essential that the parties to collective agreements are given the opportunity to participate in the social dialogue at European level. Since we are no longer organising domestic markets alone, but do so in the context of the European internal market, it is the other side of the same coin that certain minimum standards of social rights for workers are set - also at European level.

Subsidiarity also forms part of this. According to our concept of freedom - as opposed to the socialist concept of solidarity - subsidiarity also implies a degree of individual responsibility. Higher authorities must only perform those tasks that the lower authorities are unable to perform themselves. The individual contributes with all his abilities to his own and the community's benefit. Therefore this is also a question of identity, the individual's identity, an expression of human dignity - and, within the context of the European Union, even the expression of individual peoples whose diversity we must come to understand as the EU's richness.

Yet, we also have to acknowledge that we need reforms for the concrete shaping of the social market economy. Our discussion about system reform is almost exclusively a discussion about reforming social security systems. Isn't it equally important to renew our administrative structures to enable faster and more up-to-date decisions? Isn't it equally important to improve our school systems, our universities, so that science will again provide insights that can translate into economic production with reasonable efforts?

To us as Christian democrats, such a reform policy is only conceivable based on values. Oriented in the Christian understanding of the human being, without looking at everything from a profit point of view, we are convinced that respect of human dignity - Article 1 of the Human Rights Charter of the (hopefully) soon to be revived European Constitution - has to be the foundation of our policy.

Today we should look towards the future, develop visionary thinking and look for solutions, instead of sticking to our day-to-day pragmatism, saying that "this doesn't work and that doesn't work either". We should fight, giving our principles top priority, make an effort to gain majorities, and - again and again - translate these ideals into political action. This is our task.

A word of thanks is due to all who have committed time and effort to the EUCDW, especially in preparing and organising our Congress, our conferences and Board meetings as well as in representing EUCDW positions within the EPP. Let me specially mention the First Vice President Fritz Neugebauer, who presided some of the Board meetings, Vice President Guido Dumon, Secretary General Christoph Weißkirchen as well as the members of the Working Group Politics who prepared the activities of the EUCDW.

Elmar Brok, President

Activities

During the last year the following EUCDW meetings took place:

Congress

The 9th EUCDW Congress took place in Vienna on 03 September 2005. It was staged under the motto "For a Europe of **Social** Market Economy".

This topic was discussed in principle, while the following resolutions were taken with regard to concrete topics:

- European Union: No Alternative to the Constitution.
A critical Dialogue about Content and Style of EU Policies is Needed;
- In Favour of a Services Directive in the Internal Market;
Combination of Competitiveness and Social Cohesion;
- EU Parliament Must Remain Faithful to its Working Time Policies;
Framework regulations governing social protection must follow the EU Constitution

Another resolution was approved concerning the organisation and work of the EUCDW.

The member organisations are obviously satisfied with the work of the Presidium which was revealed by the re-election of President Elmar Brok (unanimously) and of three of the Vice Presidents: Fritz Neugebauer (First Vice President), Guido Dumon and Domenec Sesmilo Rius. Richard Hesse was appointed Honorary Vice President. The Vice Presidents David Agius from Malta and Antonio Di Matteo from Italy were newly elected as well as the Board members Léon Drucker from Luxembourg and Ralf Brauksiepe.

Board

The Board met four times: on 5 March 2005 in Haus Schwarzbachtal in Erlbach, on 11 June 2005 in the Universidad San Pablo in Madrid, on 3 September 2005 in the ÖGB-owned Seminar Centre Strudlhof in Vienna, and on 11 December 2005 in the Schosshotel Zamek Mostov in Cheb and/or in the Haus Schwarzbachtal in Erlbach respectively.

During the Erlbach meeting in March, the discussion was mainly centred on preparing common positions about various directives: Working Time Directive, Merger Directive, Lisbon Process, Services Directive. Additionally a timetable was approved for the work ahead of the Congress.

In Madrid the above mentioned topics (in particular the Services Directive) were dealt with more in detail; the current situation of the EU Constitution was also highlighted. Moreover, the contents for the forthcoming Congress were determined.

The Board also took resolutions with regard to form and structure, the planned amendment of the Statutes and rules of the association, the internal regulation of the Congress, the Congress' committees, the right to vote and the planned resolutions of the Congress.

These points - including the structure of the Presidium - were approved at the Board meeting in Vienna. After the Congress the Treasurer Ria Oomen-Ruijten, MEP, and the Secretary General Christoph Weißkirchen were re-elected unanimously.

In Cheb/Erlbach the Board evaluated the Congress positively. The Board members were satisfied with the preparations, progress and resolutions reached. Additionally - in the final phase of parliamentary debate - the Board confirmed its decisions about the Services Directive. Last, but not least preparations were made for the forthcoming EPP Congress in Rome.

Presidium

The EUCDW Presidium met in Mödling on 19 February 2005 and prepared the work of the Board. Apart from that, they re-examined the contents and methodology of the EUCDW work with a view to further improvements.

Working Group Politics

In addition to the Board and Presidium meetings, the members of the Working Group Politics met on 17 May 2005, 04 July 2005, and 28 November 2005 to prepare the political decisions of the Board and Presidium.



Political Work

In the last year the EUCDW published in total 14 position papers:

- 23.12.2005 EUCDW welcomes initiative of the International Monetary Funds IMF against poverty
- 14.12.2005 Secure a Large Majority Now for the Services Directive!
Conduct negotiations for a successful vote in February
- 30.11.2005 EUCDW supports a social dimension of South East European Energy Community
- 04.10.2005 The services directive must strengthen competition and social cohesion
EUCDW: Parliament needs a coherent position
- 03.09.2005 European Union: No Alternative to the Constitution
Critical Dialogue about Content and Style of EU Policies is Needed
- 03.09.2005 In Favour of a Services Directive in the Internal Market
Combination of Competitiveness and Social Cohesion
- 03.09.2005 EU Parliament Must Remain Faithful to its Working Time Policies
Social Protection Framework Complies with EU Constitution
EUCDW Demands an End to the Ideological Debate
- 13.04.2005 Directive on working time :
Whom does the EU Commission's proposal help?
- 06.04.2005 Meeting EUCDW - François Biltgen
- 18.03.2005 Provision of services must meet social, ecological and quality demands:
EUCDW demands new approach

- 15.03.2005 Facilitate the merger of companies -
Protect the Concept of Partnership in Companies
Merger Directive has to be in line with the European Company statute
- 11.03.2005 EUCDW welcomes decisions of the EPP concerning the Lisbon Strategy
Reforms on the basis of the Social Market Economy
- 10.02.2005 The EUCDW welcomes the announced modification of the Service Directive
- 04.02.2005 EUCDW welcomes revitalisation of the Lisbon strategy by the EU Commission
Will now concrete steps follow ?

Participation in EPP Meetings

At the following EPP meetings, the EUCDW was represented either by President Elmar Brok MEP or Vice-president Guido Dumon or Secretary General Christoph Weisskirchen:

29-01-2005	Political Bureau
04-03-2005	Political Bureau
27-06-2005	Political Bureau
19-09-2005	Political Bureau
07-11-2005	Political Bureau

In addition, EUCDW representatives took part in the following EPP working group meetings:

Working Group 1 (European Policy):	Elmar Brok / Guido Dumon / Christoph Weisskirchen
Working Group 2 (Economic and social policy):	Bartho Pronk MEP/ Christoph Weisskirchen
Working Group 3 (Enlargement):	Christoph Weisskirchen
Working Group 5 (Foreign policy):	Elmar Brok MEP

Discussions and Seminar Participation

As well as the official seminars and meetings, a series of discussions also took place with party and representatives of the EPP-ED group.

In addition, EUCDW representatives also took part in a variety of other EUCDW member organisation seminars and events.

EUCDW Meetings

19-02-2005	EUCDW Presidency, Mödling
05-03-2005	EUCDW Board, Erlbach
17-05-2005	<i>Working Group 'Politics'</i>
11-06-2005	EUCDW Board, Madrid
04-07-2005	<i>Working Group 'Politics'</i>
03-09-2005	EUCDW Congress, Vienna
03-09-2005	EUCDW Board, Vienna
28-11-2005	<i>Working Group 'Politics'</i>
11-12-2005	EUCDW Board, Cheb / Erlbach