



"Flexicurity" must not be misused as "Flexible Exploitation"

Social Clause Calls for a Refocusing of the Current Debate

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With a view to the current debate about the compatibility of "flexibility" and "social security" – embraced under the somewhat vague slogan of "flexicurity" – the EUCDW declares the following: All deliberations must be based on the fact that Europe's most important "raw material" does not consist of mineral resources, but of human beings with high levels of qualification and motivation. Therefore the envisaged reform policy must not aim unilaterally at a flexibilisation to the detriment of the employees. The EUCDW welcomes all activities of the European Social Partners which realize this aim.

The social Europe – that is supposed to benefit largely from the Reform Treaty – may not start to dismantle employees' rights, right after adopting the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Given the increasing income disparities between managers and employees, enforceable employment rights may not be undermined without adequate compensation.

Such a new start would have fatal consequences: Politics and the social partners would both lose – to the benefit of both extremes of the political spectrum.

Therefore it is essential that the following basic rules are followed in reform politics:

- The policies of all EU institutions, but above all of the EU Commission, must make it clear that the unregulated Single Market is not the yardstick of the European unification process; being tantamount to the competition rules the Charter of Fundamental Rights and above all the Social Clause contain a political commitment to ensure high levels of social security.
- In the field of the social security and tax systems, the financing of public services needs to be ensured – if necessary by means of cooperation at European level – (social services that ensure a dignified life even in situations of economic stress, high levels of education and training and, if necessary, intervention strategies as part of labour market policies).
- Employment protection must ensure just and reasonable working conditions; the regulations of employment protection must always be based on enforceable employment rights (also as far as protection against dismissal is concerned).
- The debate about "flexicurity" must be linked with regulations concerning temporary employment, a differentiation between employment and service contracts (definition of the term "employee") and a Working Time Directive that takes the combination of job and family life seriously.

Only if the EU and/or the EU member countries have proven their capability to act in these fields (and do so even under the pressure of international companies), will people start to accept the EU as a social space.

The European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW) is the workers' organisation of the European People's Party (EPP) with 24 member organisations from 18 countries.

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