



2008 must bring concrete socio-political successes

Why otherwise should people vote for the EU in 2009?

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2008 is the last year of the current legislative period. In 2009, the Members of the EU Parliament have to submit themselves to the vote of the people. A new European Commission will also be appointed.

With this in mind, the European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW) asserts that the socio-political balance achieved to date during this legislative period is poor. There is a lack of any clear signal that the European process of unification really grasps the concept of a socially just Europe being an advantage for the continent, or that workers' rights and motivation are regarded as a key factor for productivity. The EU must actively counteract the impression that it is just a vehicle for a form of untamed competition that has nothing to do with the Social Market Economy.

The Lisbon Treaty's new Social Clause can play an important role in this. However, concrete decisions need to be taken quickly to bring it to life.

It is not enough just to point to the now socially balanced Services Directive. Social imbalance was only averted thanks to a mighty show of power from the EU Parliament, which asserted itself over the EU Commission that had clung for too long to its neoliberal draft. The Commission then followed this up with the 'Green Paper on Labour Law' and the debate about 'flexicurity' – and in so doing was once again unable to strike the balance between required flexibility and employment protection that is needed for social cohesion and the structured development of society.

What about protection at the workplace and/or in situations of social need? What about workers' enforceable rights? What about the dependability and ability to plan that is essential for starting a family? And thus for a society that is to remain attractive for investment in the future?

The three EU institutions – Council, Commission and Parliament – must summon up the will to generate the right impetus here. However, we need concrete successes in terms of working time, temporary work and social dialogue. The relevant directives (Working Time Directive, Temporary Agency Workers Directive and revision of the EU Works Council Directive) must be given the force of law as quickly as possible. All that is now needed for this - following the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty - is a qualified majority in the Council, for as a sign of reasonable balance and a signal that Europe is not only economically strong but also socially balanced these guidelines are vital.

The European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW) is made up of 24 workers' organisations from 18 countries and is an association of the European People's Party (EPP). Officially responsible for the EUCDW is Christoph Weißkirchen, the General Secretary.
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