



EUCDW Annual Report 2004

Introduction

The year 2004 was characterised at the European level by three major events, all of which are ongoing and all of which will also continue to influence the activities of the EUCDW and its member organisations over the coming years.

In May 2004, the admission of 10 new countries meant the largest expansion ever in the history of the European Union. The decades long division of Europe was thus formally brought to an end. Now the job is to develop and shape this expansion in political, economic and social terms. The idea of the European Union is to bring people and populations together in peace. However, within the new, enlarged European Union, this internal cohesion first has to be created. Faced with the enormous challenges brought about by economic and social reform it is a particular challenge for us as workers' organisations to stand up for the rights of working people, especially in the new member states. It is up to us to help in building up workers' organisations, trades unions, and workers' representative bodies in firms and businesses.

However, such efforts often come up against two obstacles: For the one part, against a spirit of economic liberalism that is still widespread in these countries that puts competition above all else and attributes only secondary importance to the principles of 'solidarity' and 'social cohesion'. For the other, against prejudices due to the terms 'worker's movement' and 'trades union' having been tainted in the past by inappropriate use under communist rule.

We have to overcome both of these hurdles not only in order to lead these societies up to the level of Western European countries in material terms, but also to shape the economic and social model of these new member states in the spirit of social market economics. In the process, of course, it will be important to restructure the European Social Model in such a way that it can stand its ground in global competition and remain permanently stable.

The second major event was the adoption of the European constitution by the inter-governmental conference.

The constitution marks another step in developing the Europe of the internal market into a political union. This, however, also requires the creation of a genuine social union. And much was achieved along this path: In the basic values and objectives, freedom was linked to solidarity, equality to respect for pluralism, competition with social market economics. In the Charter of Fundamental Rights the Europe that we want is becoming ever more visible, with:

- the right to healthy, safe and dignified working conditions,
- protection from unfair dismissal,
- the right to social security,
- the right to health protection,
- equality of men and women,
- protection from discrimination,
- freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining,
- the right of workers to information and consultation within their company,
- the right to education and in the broader sense our protection as consumers and protection of environment.

However, this does not make the EU into a 'superstate'. An early warning system and a right to petition for every individual national parliament, plus a power structure that only gives responsibility to the EU based on precise definitions in part 3 of the constitution, make it clear that all powers that are not specifically mentioned in the constitution remain at the national level. This includes employment policy (where the EU essentially only has a coordinating role) and – due to the existing differences between EU member states – the social security systems.

Unfortunately, the objectives we had set were not achieved to the same degree in terms of expanding the EU's ability to take action (in part III; please see the evaluation of the EUCDW in the annex). Nevertheless, adoption of the constitution is essential to achieving the goal of genuine political and social union.

Every country will take its decision on the constitution according to its own rules, whether that be by the parliamentary route or via a referendum. However, the vision of people living together, respecting the dignity of the responsible individual that is expressed in this vision, will only become reality if we all embrace it together.

As regards the results of the European elections and the reconstitution of the EU Parliament, we are delighted by the EPP's election victory and by the fact that the party again represents the largest group in the EU Parliament (achieving an absolute majority, however, is dependent on collaboration with other parties). We are also able to state that in the person of Ria Oomen we have once again succeeded in having a member of the EUCDA governing body made coordinator of the EPP-ED group in the Committee for Social Affairs and Employment. In addition, we were also able to secure close collaboration between the EUCDA and EPP-ED's workers group.

In the so-called 'Services Directive' and 'Working Time Directive' two important themes of social policy stand on the agenda in the coming year. The Services Directive is mainly concerned with ensuring that by introducing the 'Country of Origin Principle' the rules for protecting people (e.g. job protection, environmental protection and consumer protection) are not undermined or circumvented. In the case of the 'Working Time Directive' we must be on our guard to ensure that the burden of the called for increased flexibility in working hours does not fall solely on employees, but rather that the right balance is found, for example in terms of reconciling family and career.

Unemployment is still the biggest problem. Not least because of this, we must therefore also assert ourselves forcefully in the discussions on the Lisbon process.

For the EUCDA, 2005 is the year of our ninth congress. It is due to take place from the 2nd-4th September in Vienna. This is why the preceding conference intends to discuss the fundamental question whether the ideology of the **free market economy** – in its sole concentration on the freedom of the entrepreneur – ignores the importance and the role of other people's freedom in providing the society with a certain degree of cohesiveness: people who may not be quite so efficient such as the elderly, the ill, the young and children. The freedom of these people requires social protection (which is why the economic system foreseen by the EU Constitution is based on the principles of the '**Social Market Economy**')

A word of thanks is due to all who have committed time and effort to the EUCDW, especially in preparing and organising our conferences and Board meetings, as well as in representing EUCDW positions within the EPP. I would like to make special mention of 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 of the 'working group politics' who prepared the activities of the EUCDW.

Elmar Brok, President

Activities

In summary, the following EUCDW meetings took place during the year:

Board

The Board met on four occasions: On 28th February in the Best Western Park Hotel in Bucharest, Rumania; on 17th April in the Hotel Sacre-Cœur in Galway, Ireland; on 11th September in the Zonheuvel Hotel and Conference Centre in Doorn, Holland; and, on 6th November in the Hotel Cidadela in Cascais, Portugal.

Part of the meeting in Bucharest was spent on a review of the resolutions from the last EPP congress in respect of the motions put forward by the EUCDW. The board was entirely satisfied with the result. The main focus of the meeting was a discussion about the important points for the coming legislative period, 2004-2009. The policy working group was given the task of drafting a text based on the key points agreed. The meeting also touched on the issue of the role of social partners and the role of the so-called 'civil society'. A conclusion about this was to be drawn at the next board meeting in Galway.

In Galway, the board continued to work on the issues thrown up in Bucharest. First it approved the texts for a 2004-2009 action plan and a corresponding short memorandum. Secondly, there was a discussion about the role of the civil society. The EUCDW board understands this to mean in essence organisations associated with a specific subject that – unlike social partners – cannot make any (ultimately quasi legally) binding agreements, but that can have an influence in the run-up to decisions being made. In order for such organisations to operate at the European level, the EUCDW board urged the establishment of binding criteria (looking, above all, at such organisations being independent and representative across the whole of Europe).

Thirdly, the search for Christian social partners in Central and Eastern Europe was also discussed.

In Doorn, the focus was on assessing the European elections and the election results, as well as on decisions taken in the course of the reconstitution of the EPP/ED group. The EUCDW board also dealt with the text of the EU constitution approved by the inter-governmental conference. It maintained its criticism of the lack of ability for the EU to take action, in particular in the area of social policy, but nevertheless saw no alternative en route to a genuine political union than for the constitution to be adopted.

Finally, in Cascais the board dealt primarily with fundamental issues of cross-border collaboration in the area of health provision and with the current 'Services directive' and 'Working time direction' dossiers. In the case of these two projects in particular, the EUCDW, working closely with the worker's group, is to try to force through its own points of view.

Presidency

The EUCDW's executive committee met on the 6th November in Cascais and spent the meeting in part preparing for the board meeting that followed immediately thereafter. The run-up to the next congress, in Vienna in September 2005, was also discussed. It is intended that by then the EUCDW's work, both in its content and methods, will have been reviewed by meetings of the executive committee and the board to see if it can be improved in any way.

Policy Working Group

Outside of the Board and Presidency meetings, the policy working group met on 06.01.2004, 29.03.2004 and on 08.12.2004.

In these meetings, policy decisions to be taken by the Board and Presidency were prepared.

Political Work

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

- 08.12.2004 The Directive on services in the internal market -
Utilise the positive power of the market
Retain standards of safety and quality
- 09.09.2004 European fiscal coordination
EUCDW demands Decision from EU Finance Ministers
- 14.07.2004 The European Constitution:
A new beginning, but not yet the end
The process of European unification has been given a big push
forward - which now has to be followed by further steps
- 17.06.2004 A Constitution for the Internal Market only?
Heads of Government must also look ahead to future referendums
- 09.06.2004 Election appeal of the EUCDW
- 04.06.2004 THE BOLKESTEIN DIRECTIVE: NO !
It's against solidarity, it's against subsidiarity, it's against the constitution: It's against
the Europe we want
- 02.06.2004 Brok: "European Mass Migration Unlikely"
Warnings that a collapse of social security systems may be imminent
are "scare-mongering", says EUCDW President
- 25.05.2004 Memorandum for a social Europe 2004-2009
Christian democratic workers' demands of the European Union
(short version)
- 25.05.2004 Action Plan for Europe 2004-2009
Christian democratic workers' demands for the European Union
(long version)
- 18.05.2004 A 'Social Clause' and a 'Stability Clause' must be included in the European Constitution
Against softening the EURO - For more ability for Europe to act in
terms of social cohesion
- 26.03.2004 EU-Council agrees in principle on EU-Constitution
- 24.03.2004 Spring summit must formulate verifiable targets
Improving productivity - bringing reforms in line with people's
values and needs
- 18.03.2004 Romania's way into the European Union
Strengthening Democracy: precondition of the adhesion
- 28.02.2004 Restore Democracy in Moldova - Respect human rights -
Secure Independence from Russia

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:

04/05.02.2004

EPP-Congress

Delegates: Elmar Brok MEP, Fritz Neugebauer MP, Guido Dumon, Domenec Sesmilo, Christophe Jussac, Christoph Weisskirchen, Gerrit Terpstra, Bartho Pronk MEP, Winfried Menrad MEP, Ria Oomen MEP, Miet Smet MEP

Guests: Carlo Costalli, Piergiorgio Sciacqua, Leo Pauwels, Bruno Machiels, Henri Catherin

29.04.2004 Political Bureau

17/18.06.2004 Political Bureau

18.10.2004 Political Bureau

03.12.2004 Political Bureau

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

Working Group 1 (European Policy):

Guido Dumon/
Bartho Pronk MEP/
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

Amendment Committee

Elmar Brok MEP/
Guido Dumon/
Christoph Weisskirchen

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 (for example, the KGZE in Vienna).

EUCDW Meetings

06.01.2004	<i>Working Group 'Politics'</i>
<i>27-29.02.2004</i>	<i>EPP Congress</i>
27-29.02.2004	EUCDW Board, Bucharest
29.03.2004	<i>Working Group 'Politics'</i>
16-18.04.2004	EUCDW Board, Galway
<i>(13.06.2004</i>	<i>European Elections)</i>
10-12.09.2004	EUCDW Board, Doorn
05-07.11.2004	EUCDW Presidency, Cascais
05-07.11.2004	EUCDW Board, Cascais
08.12.2004	<i>Working Group 'Politics'</i>