



EUCDW annual Activity Report 2015

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1. Introduction

2015 was the year in which work in the eighth legislature of the European Parliament and in the new European Commission took off and was the year in which the European Union faced both the Greek crisis, conflicts and civil war in Ukraine, Libya and Syria, and an unprecedented flow of refugees to the European Union. The European Union of Christian Democratic Workers (EUCDW) calls for a comprehensive European solution to this European problem, involving all Member States and third countries. Because only a strong, common European asylum policy will offer relief. Unfortunately, for over a decade the Member States have blocked decisions on a common asylum policy and a common European border and coast guard in the Council. Now, they have to understand that Europe is not the problem, but part of the solution. Europe has to prove that the values we promote worldwide are also the values we practice at home. As so often in the history of the European Union, the crisis forms an opportunity, and EUCDW continues to call for a comprehensive, effective and humane European response.

For the 2015 EPP Statutory Congress, EUCDW actively contributed to the drafting process in EPP working groups 1 and 2, in particular with regard to the EPP Congress Document 'Protecting and Promoting our Union' to be presented at the EPP Congress in Madrid on 21st-22nd October 2015. EUCDW succeeded in including a strong chapter on sustainable growth calling on the promotion and protection of the European Social Market Economy.

EUCDW continued to be an active participant in the discussions around the European Social Market Economy, taking part in the March 5th high-level event by the Commission on 'A new start for Social Dialogue in Europe' and forcefully calling for the strengthening of the EU's social dimension, through decisive action against social dumping and fraudulent constructions and upward convergence of social standards in the EU. In this regard, EUCDW, together with the support of the EPP colleagues in the European parliament, ensured the rejection of the proposal for a single limited liability private company statute in the Employment Committee in 2015 and is working hard to reach a similar result in the Committee on Legal Affairs, which is in the lead, in 2016.

2015 also saw the continuation of the negotiations between the Commission and the United States on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations and the adoption of the European Parliament's recommendation on 8th July. EUCDW, in cooperation



with a number of EPP-MEPs, calls for a well-balanced and well-negotiated trade agreement with the US with respect for the highest social, environmental and health standards. These conditions are clearly reflected in the resolution adopted by the European Parliament. We are convinced that the agreement can stimulate the economic recovery and job creation in the EU and stress that the respect for labour- and environmental norms must stay top of the agenda. EUCDW calls on the European Commission to follow our recommendations in order to reach a balanced trade agreement for qualitative and sustainable trade.

The purpose of this activity report is to provide a brief overview of the timing and content of the various EUCDW meetings and to summarise the areas of action in which EUCDW has been working with the European People's Party and the European Parliament. It is the ambition of the EUCDW Presidency to continue to advocate Christian-social political ideas within these institutions, driven by the renewed impetus given to the association on the XI. Congress in 2014.

2. Internal organisation

At the 2015 EPP Congress, the European People's Party revealed a new logo and website. The logo of the EPP was designed as an umbrella to cover the EPP family, including EPP member associations and EPP groups in the various parliaments. In line with the request from the EPP, EUCDW unanimously adopted a new logo at the 27 November 2015 board meeting in Rome. At the earlier meeting in Malaga, Spain, on 02 July 2015, the board also decided to build a new EUCDW website, work which should be completed during 2016.





3. Overview of EUCDW meetings

a. Presidium

In the course of 2015, the EUCDW presidium met on the 2nd of July in Spain, and on 21st October in Madrid, Spain, on the side-line of the 2015 EPP Congress.

At the EUCDW Presidium meeting on 2nd July in Spain, the presidium put forward the nominations for the composition of the delegation to the 21-22 October 2015 EPP Statutory Congress in Madrid and aligned its position on the draft Congress document titled *'Protecting and Promoting our Union'*.

On the side-lines of the 21-22 October 2015 EPP Statutory Congress, EUCDW hosted an open Presidium meeting on 21st October 2015 in Madrid, Spain. The meeting was co-chaired by Elmar Brok, president of EUCDW, and Jeroen Lenaers, acting chair of the EPP Workers' Group, in the presence of the EUCDW presidium, EZA president Bartho Pronk and Secretary-General Sigrid Schraml, Irish Minister for European Affairs Dara Murphy, who was elected the next day as EPP Vice-President, and MEPs Ivo Belet, Sofia Ribeiro and Claude Rolin.

The discussion mainly revolved around the Congress resolution on migration entitled *'Protecting Refugees - Securing the EU's External Borders - Stepping Up Action Against Irregular Migration'*, arguing for respect for the right to seek asylum for those in need of protection, while putting in place swift and effective return and readmission measures for those not qualifying.

b. Board

In the course of 2015, the EUCDW board met during three meetings, on February 5th in Greece, on 2nd July in Spain, and on November 27th in Italy.

The first EUCDW board meeting of 2015 took place on 5th February 2015 in Greece and was co-hosted by our Greek member organisation D.A.K.E. The main focus of the meeting was the social situation in Greece and the outcome of the elections,



following an introductory note by EUCDW President Elmar Brok and a report by D.A.K.E. President Nikolaos Kioutsoukis. The importance of social dialogue to ensure a sustained economic and social recovery was highlighted. The board confirmed its support for the Commission's combined approach of fiscal responsibility, structural reforms and investment for growth, while stressing the importance for social partners and civil society to be able to participate in meaningful social dialogue.

As a result of the discussions, the board gathered in Athens agreed on a common initiative with regard to the situation in Greece. The full text can be found in Annex IV. The board also approved the financial report of 2014 and the organisation's budget for 2015. Furthermore, the new EUCDW Executive Secretary, Lawrence Cappelle, was welcomed after Jonathan Stabenow left the organisation in 2014.

On 2nd July 2015 EUCDW held the second board meeting in Spain. The main focus of the meeting, co-hosted by our Spanish member organisation C.E.A.T., was the social and economic situation in Spain and the outcome of the regional and local elections as well as recent developments in Greece, following an introduction by EUCDW President Elmar Brok and a report by EUCDW Vice-President Gregorio Gonzalez Roldan. The board also approved the EUCDW activity report of 2014 and agreed to create a new EUCDW website.

The third and final board meeting of 2015 took place on 27th November in Italy and was co-hosted by our Italian member organisation MCL. The board discussed the social and economic situation in Italy as well as the results of the 2015 EPP Statutory Congress. The key debate focused on migration and asylum policy in the European Union and was kicked-off by a report by EUCDW President Elmar Brok on the state of play and upcoming decisions by the European Commission and European Council. The meeting was closed by a presentation and discussion on the TTIP-negotiations.

c. Other

A first breakfast meeting was organised by the EPP Workers' Group in the European Parliament on 16th December 2015 in Strasbourg, France, in the presence of members of the EUCDW presidency. Discussion points were the refugee crisis, the upcoming



labour mobility package and the organisation of the EPP Workers' Group seminar in March, 2016.

4. Political work

a. European People's Party

EUCDW actively contributed to the drafting process in the EPP working groups 1 and 2, in particular with regard to the EPP Congress Document 'Protecting and Promoting our Union' to be presented at the EPP Congress in Madrid on 21st-22nd October 2015. EUCDW succeeded in including a strong chapter on sustainable growth calling on the promotion and protection of the European Social Market Economy.

On 21st-22nd October 2015, over 70 EPP member parties and associations and a total of more than one thousand delegates and guests. EUCDW was represented by a delegation of fifteen delegates and guests in total, including EUCDW President Elmar Brok, Secretary-General Ivo Belet, Treasurer Ria Oomen-Ruijten and delegates and guests from the presidium and from the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA).

The Congress was kicked off by a public session on the afternoon of 21st October with a series of panel debates on current EU topics, including on *How to build a more inclusive society* with EUCDW President Elmar Brok. This was followed by a thematic discussion on the Congress document entitled Protecting the Union and Promoting our Values and the Congress resolutions on topics including the refugee crisis. All documents were adopted with a very large majority. The closing session of the Congress was held on 22nd October, with a line-up of speakers including Heads of State and Government, the Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission. The keynote speech was delivered by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Delegates proceeded to re-elect EPP President Joseph Daul and Secretary-General Antonio Lopez-Isturiz White for a new three-year mandate, as well as ten EPP Vice-



Presidents, including European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs Marianne Thyssen.

The EUCDW also participated in the drafting of the policy papers "Boosting e-skills", "Digital Agenda" and "Smart Regulation" prepared in Working Group 2 and adopted at the EPP Political Assembly. The EUCDW called for boosting digital skills and defended the position that smart regulation is of great importance for economic growth in the single market, but underlined that social dialogue and social impact assessments remain a vital part of our social market economy throughout the 'Smart Regulation' process, in accordance with art. 9 TFEU and art. 152 TFEU'.

In his capacity as responsible for international relations of the EPP, EUCDW president Elmar Brok took part in all Summits of EPP Heads of State and Government, as well as in the EPP Political Assemblies.

b. European Parliament

EUCDW put significant efforts in the follow-up of parliamentary resolutions concerning the negotiations for a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which was adopted by the European Parliament on 08th of July 2015. A number of amendments were tabled via the MEPs of the EPP Workers' Group.

Further legislative files of particular interest included the ongoing negotiations on the proposal for a single member private limited liability company, or Societas Unius Personae (SUP), strengthening the European Social Dialogue, the EU investment strategy through the Youth Guarantee and the European Fund for Structural Investment, the Commission's proposals towards a strong, common migration and asylum policy and the facilitation of the free movement of workers and the clarification of their rights.

The EUCDW has reached out to the newly elected EPP Group Members of the European Parliament, especially those active in the committees of major interest to the EUCDW. On 24th June 2015, the EPP Workers' Group in the European Parliament was re-



established, with an EUCDW representation on the board of the Workers' Group to ensure close cooperation, allowing us to build important synergies between EUCDW, the EPP Group in the European Parliament and the European Commission.

5. Annexes

I. List of EPP decision-making organs with EUCDW participation in 2015

i. EPP Statutory Congress

October 21st - 22nd, Madrid

ii. EPP Political Assemblies

January 22nd-23rd

March 2nd-3rd

June 1st-2nd

September 1st-2nd

October 21st-22nd (EPP Statutory Congress Madrid)

December 10th-11th

iii. EPP Working Group 1 on European Policy

March 3rd

April 14th

June 2nd

iv. EPP Working Group 2 on Economic and Social Policy

January 25th

April 13th



July 1st

v. EPP Workers' Group

December 16th, Strasbourg