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Workgroup V on Social Europe

Delegation from the University of Tampere, Finland

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First of all, we find it essential to create a close relationship between social and economic integration of the EU. Those developments should not be considered contradictory but complementary to each other. Instead of being a burden, social security is the corner stone of the welfare of Europe and its people. Social market economy should be preferred over Open market economy.

Positive integration, that seeks coordinated action taking social as well as economic objectives into consideration, should be enhanced. We believe that when using not only the methods of negative integration, such as bringing down the barriers of free trade, it is in the long term possible to have positive effects on social policy and the financing of social security.

We suggest that

1. As mentioned in the Final report of Working Group XI on Social Europe the scope of the "Broad Economic Policy Guidelines [should] be extended to include social issues and be renamed the Broad Economic and Social Policy Guidelines" (CONV 516/1/03/V/51).
2. All actors should be included in the making of Social Europe. It is important that it is not just governments of the EU member states and bureaucrats that are involved but also the civil society and the third sector.

3. The role of social partners and social dialogue have to be clearly defined and reinforced. The role of employers and unions should be distinct from that played by the organized civil society (CONV 516/1/03/VII/64 and 66). A highly developed and a working system of social dialogue creates better preconditions for survival in the competition of global market.
4. Sustainable development should not only be seen from the ecological angle but economic and social aspects need to be taken into account as well. (See CONV 516/1/03/I/10).
5. Qualified majority voting should be increased in the field of social policy. This could open up new opportunities for positive integration.
6. Use of the open method of coordination as a means of voluntarily exchanging information in order to further the harmonising process of the policies of member states should be increased in areas where formulating common EU legislation is not enshrined in the treaty. We agree on the proposition by the Working Group XI on Social Europe that "The Treaty provision on the open method of coordination should be embodied in the Constitutional Treaty, within the Chapter on Union instruments which constitute non-legislative measures" (CONV 516/1/03/IV/42).
7. The financing of Social Europe and a sufficient standard of social security in member states needs to be secured. The community level actions in social policy should be in accordance with the actions taken at member state level, which in the end form the basis of social security.
8. A high level of physical and mental health, an essential right of European citizens, should be one of the basic objectives of the Union (CONV516/1/03/II/21).
 - The close link between a high level of physical and mental health and a well-functioning society as well as economy has to be recognized. Therefore the planning and decision-making process of any action should include a consideration of health outcomes.
 - Competences at the EU level have to be strengthened in the field of public health as to

communicable diseases, bioterrorism and WHO agreements (CONV516/1/03/III/35). We think that, in addition, the prevention of non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular etc) should gain more attention at the EU level. In that context a European-wide network with standardized, evidence-based guidelines concerning health education and illness prevention could achieve long-term success.

- The universal access for every citizen to health services is crucial in order to obtain a high level of physical and mental health (CONV516/1/03/II/19). In our opinion it should be underlined that, again, the prevention of any kind of sickness is the more effective than treatment. Any kind of health service in any EU country should focus on prevention.