



APRIL 2006

N°42

IN BRIEF

Debate with the Permanent Forum of Civil Society: *Citizens facing up to the EU*

« Getting Europe out of the crisis » could constitute the creed of the Permanent Forum of Civil Society created in 1995 from the initiative of the International European Movement. On 30th March, the Forum held a large debate over the manifesto « Citizens facing up to the EU ».

Following the rejection of the constitutional treaty by French and Dutch voters, the Commission launched a « period of reflection ». The Forum's objective is to make this period useful, with real and conspicuous results: Europe should not be seen as a threat but as a protection by society.

Thus, a roadmap is proposed to the Austrian Presidency. This roadmap is grounded on a strong recognition by European institutions of the crucial role played by social partners and by the civil society.

Especially, this roadmap includes the proclamation of a **Solemn Declaration of European Citizens' Interdependence** during the 50th Anniversary of the Rome Treaty. This Declaration aims at encouraging a European moral community, based on common interests.

The Forum also plans the organisation of **Estates-General of Networks' Europe** in September 2006, whose report would be written by the European Economic and Social Committee.

Concerning the European Constitution, the Forum proposes some amendments (notably on the election of the President of the Commission by universal suffrage) and a genuine explanation process with the citizens.

More info: <http://www.europa-jetzt.org/>

Services Directive : the amended proposal presented to the Parliament

After the vote of the European MEPs on 16th February on the Gebhardt report (*cf. Newsletter 41*), the Commission presented to the Parliament its amended proposal for the liberalisation of services within the EU.

The MEPs broadly welcomed the new ver-

sion. Indeed, the Commission's proposal follows largely the positions expressed by the Parliament in order to have the text adopted before the end of the year.

Thus, the Commission withdrew the principle of the country of origin and excluded from the Directive's scope several sectors (public and social services, security and health services, banking activities, audio-visual...). Moreover, the text will not prevail over the Directive on the posting of workers.

More info: www.euractiv.com

Guidelines for Employment: MEPs insist on the challenges of enlargement

The European Parliament published on 24th March its report on the Council's proposal for the maintaining of Employment Guidelines in 2006.

Although MEPs favourably welcomed the proposal, they highlighted the challenges that appeared since the enlargement to Eastern countries regarding employment in the EU. Thus, they pay special attention to the demographic challenge, the increase of employment rates, the fight against illegal work, the improvement of workers' health, and to the promotion of professional mobility.

The recent adoption by the Parliament of the Brok report must be kept in mind, as well as the position of a majority of MEPs for a deepening of EU integration.

More info: www.europarl.eu.int

Debate Europe: European Discussion Forum

The European Commission encourages dialogue between European citizens, via the website Debate Europe (<http://europa.eu.int/debateeurope/>). Three current topics are proposed for debates, such as Europe's economic and social development.

Very lively and translated in all EU languages, this forum constitutes a concrete and judicious initiative in order to have a better comprehension of citizens' expectations.

Summary:

- IN BRIEF:

- *Debate with the Permanent Forum of Civil Society: Citizens facing up to the EU*
- *Services Directive: the amended proposal presented to the MEPs*
- *Guidelines for Employment: MEPs insist on the challenges of enlargement*
- *Debate Europe: European Discussion Forum*

- EUROPEAN AFFAIRS:

- *European energy policy: slow moves of Member States*
- *Parliament makes a stand against EU-funded company relocations*
- *Should the EU be « politicised »?*

- SOCIAL AGENDA:

- *Focus on the European Spring Summit*
- *Lisbon Strategy: two studies point the lack of participation at the national level*
- *Corporate Social Responsibility: conflicts between the European Commission and NGOs*

- MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES:

- *France - Communiqué of the CFE-CGC on the CPE withdrawal*
- *UK - MPA Annual Conference 2006*
- *CEC*
 - *Cooperation Agreement with ESHA*
 - *ETP in Japan and Korea*
 - *CEC General Assembly and Conference*

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS EUROPEAN ENERGY POLICY: SLOW MOVES OF MEMBER STATES



During the European Spring Summit, heads of States agreed on a new Energy policy for Europe, in a context of oil prices crisis and liberalisation of gas and electricity markets (2003 Directives).

The Commission recently presented the main points and principles of this new policy (*cf. Newsletter 41*): developing Green Energy, supply security, achieving the energy single market, and external relations.

However, during the Spring Summit, EU leaders consci-

entiously avoided delicate subjects like the deregulation of energy markets and the objectives to reach for renewable energy.

On the one hand, the European Commission warned on 4th April 17 countries that did not yet fully opened their electricity and gas markets to competition, such as Belgium, Spain, France, UK, Italy, Poland and Austria (Governments have two months to respond). On the other hand, the Commission launched legal action against 8 countries that did not transposed

directives related to renewable energies and biofuels.

The debate over nuclear energy is still very present in this field, since Member States have different point of views on the issue. For instance, the UK Parliament just approved a report against nuclear energy. On the contrary, Germany is replacing nuclear power with Russian gas. However, European MEPs recently adopted a position against the development of nuclear energy and in favour of renewables and energy efficiency.

PARLIAMENT MAKES A STAND AGAINST EU-FUNDED COMPANY RELOCATIONS

European MEPs approved on 14th April the Hutchinson report concerning the relocations of European companies which received regional aid from the EU.

The European regional policy is designed to balance wealth between the different regions of Europe, thanks to the principle of solidarity between regions. The EU grants aid aimed at stimulating economic activities and job creations according to a plan elaborated jointly with national and local authorities.

So, it is necessary to ensure

that public aid is not used by companies to finance plants' relocations, which provoke on the contrary social dramas and sometimes massive redundancies.

After the creation of the famous Globalisation Adjustment Fund (supported by the EP) that aims at limiting relocations' negative effects, the Parliament calls the Commission for the creation of a European Strategy for relocations' prevention.

Consequently, MEPs support the Commission's proposal for sanctions to enterprises which receive EU aid and

relocate their activities within 7 years. The Parliament also calls for an action against enterprises that do not relocate but damage working conditions of their employees, and also calls for more implication of the European social dialogue.

We can only be satisfied by the position of European MEPs who seem to be really determined to create a genuine European social space and to reinforce in this way EU's legitimacy with its citizens.

THE
PARLIAMENT
CALLS THE
COMMISSION
FOR THE
CREATION OF A
EUROPEAN
STRATEGY FOR
RELOCATIONS'
PREVENTION

SHOULD THE EU BE « POLITICISED »?

Notre Europe, a think tank directed by Jacques Delors, just published a new study, « Politics: The Right or the Wrong Sort of Medicine for the EU? ».

The study is designed as an exchange of opinions between Simon Hix who is in favour of politics in the EU and Stefano Bartolini who is against. The document is based on the current crisis of the EU and especially of the EU institutions towards citizens.

Indeed, a frequent criticism about the functioning of the EU concerns the bureaucratic defaults and the de-

mocratic gap. The insertion of politics in the EU may constitute a solution to this gap, for instance thanks to the election of the Commission's President by universal suffrage.

To ensure that such a process succeed, European parties must reinforce their structure and influence, and real coalitions must be developed.

S. Bartolini stresses the risk for minorities to be ignored in a functioning that would be exclusively political. Yet, S. Hix asserts that the EU structure includes enough *checks and balances* to avoid

that risk. He considers that a real debate left/right is essential to strengthen EU's legitimacy and to end its institutional impasse.

However, S. Bartolini fears that such a debate may lead to a questioning of the supranational system itself, that is to say of the EU. He denounces mass politics that can only bring a crystallization of opinions and not a dialogue and deliberation process, contrary to what the people in favour of politics in the EU believe.

More info: www.notre-europe.asso.fr



FOCUS ON THE EUROPEAN SPRING SUMMIT

According to the tradition, progresses concerning the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy were examined during the European Spring Summit in Brussels on 23rd and 24th March. However, energy-related issues concentrated the attention of heads of States and Governments, and of the medias.

Thus, EU leaders recalled the main current stakes: intensification of the foreign competition, ageing population, increase of energy prices and preservation of the supply security. To overcome these challenges, the European

Council noted the EU economic upturn since the end of 2005 that will certainly help Member States to implement structural reforms required by the Lisbon Strategy.

Concerning National Reform Plans (NRP), the European Council was delighted that it was elaborated in time and that it included wide objectives. However, EU leaders regretted that these objectives as well as the schedules lack precision. The exchange of best practices was also encouraged.

The European Council defined priority action fields: innovation (education, research, training), SMEs (creation, competitiveness, employment), and the increase of employment rates. The Council stressed that these actions should be elaborated and led with the participation of social partners.

Secondly, the attention was put on the EU energy policy (cf. article page 2), the accomplishment of the internal market, and the protection of environment.

SOCIAL AGENDA



LISBON STRATEGY: TWO STUDIES POINT THE LACK OF PARTICIPATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Whereas EU leaders showed lenience towards the national reform plans (NRP) set up in Member States, two think tanks (Bruegel and the Centre for European Reform) published a classification of the Lisbon Strategy's good and bad « pupils ».

Since the relaunch of the Lisbon Agenda by the Commission in 2005, the focus was put on economic growth and jobs, and Member States were given more "ownership" of the process, notably through the participation of social partners.

Jean Pisani-Ferry and André Sapir from Bruegel ranked Member States according to the participation of their par-

liaments, civil society, social partners and according to the follow-up of the NRPs. Estonia ranks at the top of the list and Belgium, Germany and the UK lie at the end. This grading may seem surprising, since old Member States show little participation in their NRPs, although they are often considered as States where dialogue, and especially social dialogue, is particularly developed.

The two authors of Bruegel believe that the objective of ownership by national authorities was not reached. Therefore, they recommend the adoption of minimal standards of transparency and participation by Member States, as well as the defini-

tion of policy priorities that match at the European and national levels.

The Centre for European Reform is more optimistic, observing "positive trends", and top-ranks Scandinavian countries. Poland is pointed out as the bad "pupil" of the Lisbon Strategy regarding ownership by Member States.

These two reports provoked critical reactions from Mr. Verheugen (Commission Vice-President) and from Mr. de Buck (UNICE), who denounced their "naming and shaming" approach.

More info: www.bruegel.org
www.cer.org.uk

ONE
RECOMMENDATION:
THE ADOPTION OF
MINIMAL
STANDARDS OF
TRANSPARENCY
AND
PARTICIPATION BY
MEMBER STATES

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND NGOS

The European Commission published on 22nd March a Communication « Making Europe a pole of excellence on Corporate Social Responsibility » (CSR). Even before its publication, the document had provoked critical reactions from European NGOs.

This communication especially plans the creation of a « European Alliance for CSR » that would coordinate existing and forthcoming initiatives in this field, at the company level. However, it

does not provide neither a control of these initiatives or of the principles' respect, nor the adoption of minimum standards.

European NGOs had already communicated their recommendations to the Commission when the first communication on CSR was published, in 2002. These recommendations mostly concerned the binding level of social and environmental standards and the principle of a participation of all stakeholders since

the elaboration of a strategy on CSR.

Thus, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) renewed its call for a genuine involvement and follow-up of companies on the issue, but also for a better comprehension of what corporate governance covers (transparency, certification of end products, subcontracting, relocations).

Plus d'infos: www.etuc.org/a/2190



CEC CONFERENCE ON
CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY,
BARCELONA, 2002

FRANCE - COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE CFE-CGC ON THE CPE WITHDRAWAL

Bernard Van Craeynest, President of the CFE-CGC, noted with satisfaction the words of the French leaders on the 10th of April.

The proposal for a law presented this day at the National Assembly will replace the article 8 of the law on Equal opportunities.

The specified plan focuses on professional integration of young people in difficulty, and will be clarified.

Bernard Van Craeynest recalls that the CFE-CGC is in favour of the dialogue since the 16th of January and that its proposals for amendments were ignored.

The CFE-CGC will still debate in a constructive state of mind with executive and legislative powers, and with social partners, in order to defeat unemployment in France. The situation is at least released, and allows students to attend courses as soon as possible to prepare exams that are essential for their future.

Contact: Stéphanie Forge, CFE-CGC Press Officer
E-mail: forge@cfecgc.fr - web: www.cfecgc.org



UK - MPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2006

On Monday 10th April 2006, delegates from all 22 member Associations of the MPA gathered for the Annual Conference, held in the historic precincts of Esher Place in Surrey. The themes of the Conference this year were under two headings, "Equality and Unions- a report into changes in discrimination legislation in the UK" and "Current Trends in Pensions"

The first theme was presented by Ms. Shubna Bannerjee from the well respected lawyers, Rowley-Ashworth & Co. and questions from the floor were invited before the Conference retired for lunch. After lunch the Pension presentation was made by Associates of Barclay Global Investors, who act as advisors to many UK Company pension funds. Following a lively debate, the Conference was adjourned and followed by the MPA Annual General Meeting.

Contact: Geoff Leyshon, MPA Vice President
E-mail: info@mpa-online.org.uk - web: www.mpa-online.org.uk

CEC - COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH ESHA (EUROPEAN SCHOOL HEADS ASSOCIATION)

Following contacts with ESHA officers, the CEC elaborated a cooperation agreement with the association, that will be signed soon. ESHA gathers 31 member organisations which represent at the national level school heads and deputy school heads within primary and secondary education. A ceremony is planned during the CEC General Assembly in Vienna on 4th of May to celebrate the cooperation between the CEC and ESHA.

THE EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME (ETP) IN JAPAN AND KOREA

The objective of this European Commission Initiative, designed by a consortium of internationally recognized universities and promoted by EUROCHAMBRES is to contribute to EU Companies Business Development in Japan or Korea. ETP provides the selected participants with: 3 months of distance learning of Korean or Japanese language and seminars on business culture organized in Paris, Milan and London while still working for your employer, 6 months of advanced language and business culture training organized in Japan (ETP Japan) or Korea (ETP Korea), and 3 months of in-house training in Japan or Korea-based companies.

For more details and to apply before 1 June 2006 please visit: www.etp.org

CEC GENERAL ASSEMBLY - CONFERENCE IN VIENNA

The CEC will hold its General Assembly on 4th May, and a conference on managers' mobility on 5th May, in Vienna.

The European Commission launched in 2006 the "European Year for Workers' Mobility".

The CEC aims at raising awareness on the access of managers to occupational mobility and on the situation of expatriate managers.

For more information:
www.cec-managers.org



81A, rue de la Loi
1040 Brussels
TEL : +32 2 420 10 51
FAX : + 32 2 420 12 92
Email : info@cec-managers.org
www.cec-managers.org

ABOUT CEC

The CEC unites 1.5 million executives and professionals in Europe organised into national federations and European branch federations. Since the end of the 1980s, the CEC contributes, as a social partner, to the European social dialogue. The CEC has made the task of defending the managers' specific interests its own, while maintaining dialogue with other parties.

Indeed, the CEC participated to several consultations (for instance, about the Green Paper "Demographic Change") and negotiated several framework agreements with European social partners (agreements on "Stress at work", 27 May 2004, on "Gender equality", March 2005).

The CEC promotes a European integration clearly in favour of the principle of performance and competition, but also the social market economy and a value-oriented way of conducting business, since the respect of social obligations is an added value for economy in the long run.

Photos credits:
<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/>
<http://www.euro.gouv.fr/>
Conseil de l'Union européenne
http://www.cfecgc.org/030-Dossier-Plus/10-10_Dossier-Edito.asp?DossierId=142
<http://www.ftd.de/asset/Image/Migration/2005/barroso,0.jpg>