



YOUNG EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS

ECOSY Bureau Meeting
The Netherlands
19th - 21st November 2004

“Together for a Social Europe”

ECOSY - Young European Socialists have always had an ambitious agenda for the development of the social aspects of the European Union. The debates during the Convention on the future of Europe and the Intergovernmental conference were opportunities to recall these positions. Social policy was high on the agenda of the PES and its member States during the European elections campaign.

ECOSY, at the invitation of JS in de PvdA, gathered in a conference on November 18th to further develop its reflections on its visions of social Europe and on the ways to promote it. These questions arise both with regard to the way the European Union currently promotes social policies notably in the framework of the Lisbon agenda and to the issues raised by the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. Then ECOSY must promote its positions both internally and externally.

Future social policies and the Lisbon agenda

The Lisbon agenda stated goals for the European Union to become the most competitive knowledge based economy by 2010 but also acknowledged for example the need for the European Union to have full employment as its goal. ECOSY is worried by the signals stated in the report of the former Dutch Prime Minister, Wim Kok, which the implementation of the agenda failed. The member states are forgetting the target date they had set for themselves though such a target should be an incentive for the adoption of measures to implement the Lisbon agenda.

The implementation of the Lisbon agenda should be a main priority. Its different aspects should be developed: the improvement of the economy of the EU but also the development of its social policies, the promotion of full employment, the protection of the environment. Member states should also look for new ways to stimulate them.

The unconditional privatisation and liberalisation of public services and companies is not the right solution. The private sector can never go without strong public institutions which help maintaining a fair economic environment and guarantee access to services for the general public.

The European Constitution and a social Europe

ECOSY acknowledges that the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe brings some improvement as far as European social affairs are concerned notably through the integration of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, the development of economic governance in the euro zone. However, social policy in itself is not really altered and remains simply an area for European complementary action, with the impossibility to establish a harmonized fiscal policy or a European minimum wage. The outcomes of the European Constitution are still being analysed by ECOSY's member organisations. Further, thorough debates are needed in the member states in order to enable the clear understanding of the debate and its stakes by the citizens.

The discussions on the development of a social Europe should be ongoing. The European Socialists and Social-democrats must agree on the policies they want to promote to establish

and guarantee the well-being of people. Further, ECOSY stresses the importance of the definition of a common strategy at the service of the setting up of these policies, by ECOSY and its member organisations, but also by the PES, against policy competition between countries.

Bringing the debates into our organisations

The highest priority for ECOSY must be to become more relevant to MO's. ECOSY Presidium must meet with National Boards of all MO's. The Future Leaders Conference must be reformed into ECOSY MO Leaders Council, focused on organisational & strategic planning. ECOSY should analyse proposals for a common minimum standard for all MO's to implement in their statutes. Both the BM's & PM's must take their responsibilities seriously & increase their activity. There is a need for more Political Debate inside the Bureau, thematic working groups is one solution. Bureau Agendas dominated by administrative issues an obstacle, but, is essential for ECOSY's functioning. Suggestion that 3 Bureaus/year changed to 2 BM's & 1 Co-ordination Meeting /year. (International Secretaries, dealing with administration, finance & organisational agendas) this would solve obstacle & the conflict of interest & commitment that the BM's may feel between MO's & ECOSY.

Common campaigns to remain a priority. Facilitate & encourage more regional co-operation & exchange. Summer camp is the most important opportunity to engage grassroots. Examine how to develop this further. Provide more training, reinstate winter school. A monthly info e-newsletter updating MO's on main EU current issues. Essential to have a clear & concise position paper. Much shorter with no contradictions & provide early input development from BM's. Thematic Declarations to be developed by the VP's/Working Groups for key themes/campaigns for next mandate. Pass resolutions on current events in BM to complement Position Paper. Relations with PES must be enhanced & developed. ECOSY must be the critical conscience of the PES. We must use this relationship to lobby Mother Parties to support MO's in their programme of reform and work or struggle for autonomy. We must further develop relations with NGOs and our lobbying power to achieve successful outcomes in all European Organisations/Institutions we contest or engage in.

Communicating our message and Making a difference

Communicating the message is a difficult task. We need clear positions and ways to communicate our message. There are a lot of good tools available: a regular newsletter or an accessible website to help us communicate our common positions. One other way is through campaigning.

A planned campaign should be about a thematic issue. It should contain materials like leaflets and posters. Tools should be common, but also fit the cultural differences that exist within Europe. But is even more important to have activities to develop and carry out the campaign. We should have seminars to share our experience and to develop educational materials about the topic. This will help us to get more of our (grass-root) members involved and active in the campaigns. As we are the youth we should be committed to the youth perspective of themes.

In order to involve more people in the struggle for our aims we should reach out to partners and work together with, for example, NGO's. Our work should not only be done in conference halls and behind computers. We are a movement which makes activism, demonstrating and creative actions important to make a difference. For this we need the coordination of ECOSY, but also the involvement of the member organisations. On the other hand we can use lobbying to bring our points on the political agenda. ECOSY needs to do this towards the PES and the member organisations can reinforce this through simultaneous lobbying in the national mother parties.

One concrete idea could be to establish a calendar with specific "international days" (like women's day, World AIDS day). This calendar can be used to initiate discussions and actions

around that certain topic. These activities will take place at the same time all around Europe which would show the international dimension of ECOSY. And for the member organisations it is also a benefit to get extra media attention.

ECOSY - Young European Socialists will continue to develop its reflections in the framework of its congress in 2005, through the adoption of its position paper and activity plan.