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BE/AI
Datum
26.06.06

Réceptionné le : 30/06/06

Par : *ad*

Original à : *JM*

Copies à :

Remarques :

Herrn
John Monks
Generalsekretär
Europäischer Gewerkschaftsbund
5, Boulevard Roi Albert II
B-1210 Brüssel

BELGIEN

Dear John,

The European Council has discussed how to continue with the European Constitution and the German government will play a crucial role in this during its presidency in the first half of 2007.

I am convinced that we need further initiatives beyond those agreed in the European Council to re-animate the European constitutional process. European citizens want Europe – if it is social Europe. Workers in Europe expect a European Constitution to lay the social foundations of the European Union. German trade unions have supported the constitutional process and worked intensively in it. But we are also aware, that the current draft text has been rejected by a majority in some countries. In Germany too doubts are rising, whether this draft will ever enter into force.

We have to take courageous steps to get ahead with the European Constitution. The Council debate in Brussels has shown that results in the short-term are unlikely. We need an approach, which really makes sure, that the Constitution has the legitimation of Europe's citizens. I am convinced that only a parliament legitimized directly by Europe's citizens will have the authority to draft a new Constitution, which then should be put into force by a European referendum.

Thus in 2009 the European Parliament should be elected also as a constituent assembly. The European Parliament then can work out a new draft for the Constitution which takes into account the current draft and takes up parts of the current draft that are widely accepted by the citizens, like the Charter of Fundamental Rights. But the Parliament must have the freedom to abandon parts which seem problematic and work out its own text. While doing so it should consider the citizen's demand for a stronger social dimension of European integration.

This second draft of a European Constitution then should be passed to the citizens in a European referendum.

For me the European Constitution is a central political issue in the coming years. Thus I will contact the European trade unions as well as government, political groups and parties in the coming months to promote my idea of an election of the European Parliament as a constituent assembly.

I would be happy if we could enter into a dialogue about these questions between us and in the ETUC.

Kind regards

