

ETUC ASSESSES THE SOCIAL RESULTS OF THE IRISH PRESIDENCY

"Clear priorities – mixed results"

The ETUC regards the Presidency as a period over which to measure progress made with regard to EU social policy and legislation. While ETUC recognizes that an EU Presidency cannot make decisions on its own and needs the cooperation of the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council if it is to take effective action, any Presidency has a special role to play in the way it leads debates, establishes priorities, prepares the practical work done and profiles specific issues.

The ETUC is not giving an overall political assessment of the Irish Presidency's performance. The verdict is based primarily on the ten social tests that ETUC presented in its Memorandum to the Irish Presidency at the beginning of January 2003.

Based on those ten social tests, the ETUC concludes that the Irish Presidency had one main priority, the agreement on the new Constitution and did not manage to achieve most of its own social objectives or fulfil ETUC's ambitions.

The Irish Presidency is not solely to blame for this. In several instances the European Commission was clearly the main party responsible for the lack of progress (framework for services of general interest, CSR, etc.). In other cases, various governments in the Council delayed the adoption of a compromise (temporary agency workers) or insisted on compromises that are inadequate for the social dimension of the European Union. The negotiating power, genuine pressure and high-profile political effort by the Irish Presidency led to an agreement on the new European Constitution.

IRISH PRESIDENCY	
1. IGC: Ensure a democratic, modern and social Constitutional Treaty for Europe	Generally speaking positive, but mixed on social issues
2. Lisbon Strategy: Launch measures, consistent with the Lisbon goals, to address the immediate problems facing Europe and pursue the commitment to <i>More and Better Jobs</i> based on economic, employment and social cohesion policies	Negative
3. Immigration: Develop a common EU Migration and Asylum Policy tackling integration and the management of migratory flows	Mixed result
4. EWC Revision: End the 3 year delay in the legislative review	Positive
5. Health and safety at work: Implement the Community strategy 2002-2006	Mixed result
6. Merger Control: Integrate employment considerations and participation	Negative
7. Temporary agency work: Adopt the directive	Negative
8. Working time: End the individual 'opt-out', and restrict other derogations	Negative
9. Services of General Interest: Initiate procedure for a framework directive or impose a legislative moratorium concerning liberalisation	Negative
10. Corporate Social Responsibility: Develop the CSR debate in the framework of the European Social Model, and make it clear that CSR is not an alternative to social dialogue and collective bargaining	Mixed result