



The voice of 60
million workers
in Europe

Brussels, 18 July 2006

JM/cd

Michael Sommer
President
DGB
Henriette-Herz-Platz 2
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Dear Michael,

European Constitutional Treaty

Thank you for your letter of June 26 about this matter. I had hoped for a chance to discuss it with you in the margins of the TUAC meeting with President Putin but the sad death of Heinz understandably stopped that.

I welcome your interest in how we progress the question of the Constitutional Treaty. As you say, the recent Summit struck an uncertain note.

I like your idea about using the European Parliament in a lead role to draft a new, more social constitution, which would then be passed to a European referendum. I will be interested to see the responses that this idea secures. By the way, several Italian MEPs are calling for a similar process to start now – rather than wait for the next election in 2009.

In my view, the key player will be the German Government for without the active support of the EU's largest country, there is no prospect of Ministers trusting the European Parliament with this task. The whole point of the Constitutional Convention which drafted the present text was to bring together the Parliament and the Council of Ministers with others including the Social Partners. They produced a text which has been accepted by soon 15 countries but rejected by two. I think the Parliament would do well but the question is how to persuade the nation states to concede this power to the Parliament.

Other options to make progress, still in my mind, include preparing a social protocol with equal weight to EU constitution which would strengthen social Europe. At our recent seminar in Berlin, I felt that the German Government was backpedalling on this

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idea which was originally theirs. It would be helpful if you could continue to check whether they are still interested in this idea.

We can discuss these ideas, and others, further in the context of our preparation for the German Presidency in 2007. In the meantime, we are launching a campaign this autumn for a stronger social dimension to Europe whether expressed in the new constitution, parallel to it as a protocol, or as separate feature, covering such issues as rights to strike, corporate governance (protecting and advancing co-determination), migration etc.

I will be in touch on all these points.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Monks', written over a horizontal line.

John Monks
General Secretary