

υ. Παράστα

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ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ ΣΗΜΙΤΗΣ

Με γρά'φ

Πρωτοπυργός



The AGORA of CORFU

A « new deal » for Europe




Introduction to the project

December 1997

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The project concerning a high level meeting on the future of the European model of development is an independent initiative formulated by two European experts, Bernard Brunhes, an economist specialised in labour and social policies' issues, and Professor Spiros Simitis, an expert in labour law. The project, which is outlined below, was set up with the help of the Social and Economic Council of Greece and is actively supported by the European Commission.

THE AGORA OF CORFU



The aim is to bring together high level personalities over a two days period, in order to discuss **the future of the European model of development**.

Even though the problematic concerning the future of the European model has multiple dimensions, there is a real danger for this debate to be restricted to a purely social approach or that it be left to the social partners to deal with. If we start from the premise that the prospects of a new social contract for Europe go beyond the boundaries of the social, that data concerning demography, technology and economics must be taken into account, then the debate should concern all implicated actors.

This is why we propose the organisation of a meeting in September 1998, gathering high level personalities whose very notoriety, prestige and influence will make of this a highly influential event.

The aim is to have actors actually compare their points of view, i.e. to have enterprise managers, trade unionists, politicians and experts accept to explore the ways and means for achieving an economic and social "new deal" for the European society of the 21st century. This meeting should contribute significantly to enriching the debate on the European social model, while at the same time having the advantage of bracing a discourse which is often too economic and centred on stakes proper to converging financial criteria.

D THE TEAM IN CHARGE OF DEVELOPING AND CARRYING-OUT THE PROJECT

The project's development and implementation are guaranteed by an Organising Committee comprising:

- Bernard BRUNHES, Chairman of Bernard Brunhes Consultants, France;
- Professor Spiros SIMITIS from the Institute for Labour Law, Johan Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany;
- Professor Jean KOUKIADIS, President of the Economic and Social Committee of Greece;
- Professor Robert LINDLEY from the University of Warwick, England.

D THE PROJECT'S ORGANISATION

Bernard Brunhes Consultants, a consulting, research and international co-operation firm whose activities have been expanding during the past ten years, will be responsible for managing the project. BBC has been helping enterprises in the areas of human resources management, labour organisation and social engineering, the French Government on problems related to labour and local development and, on an international level, with issues related to labour and social protection.

D THE PROJECT'S SUPERVISION

The meeting is an independent initiative supported by large corporations and enterprises' foundations. It also benefits from the active support of the European Commission.

The project's Steering Committee is responsible for guiding the overall operation from the onset of the gestation period. The European Commission will be invited to take part in the Steering Committee, together with the large corporations, enterprise foundations, Bernard Brunhes, Professor Spiros Simitis, Professor Robert Lindley and Professor Koukiadis.

D PARTICIPANTS

The participants will be invited by the meeting's organisers and will all represent high ranking personalities. They will be limited to approximately sixty, in order that they might actively participate in the debates.

WHY AN AGORA IN CORFU ?

The European Union Members States share the common experience of having built their prosperity on a particular mode of organisation proper to their societies, in spite of the diversity that characterises their institutions and national traditions. This mode consists in a legal and contractual system that guarantees the rights of workers and their participation in the regulation of labour conditions, increasingly higher levels of social protection, retirement benefits' financing modes based on the solidarity between generations and a preference for the public management of social security systems.

All these elements are today, for better or worst, brought into question. The economy's globalisation, the tertiarisation of work, demographic changes and the growing-up of information and communication technologies force to reconsider both the way in which labour is organised and the role played by actors and legislators. Tools originally developed as answers to the economic and social changes brought about by industrialisation not only come up against significant trends, like the substitution of full-time by part-time employment or the transformation of wage-earners into entrepreneurs, but also against the workers' increasing self perception as individuals having specific interests. This is so, whether one is dealing with progressively centralised collective bargaining agreements or increasingly elaborate legislation regulating working hours, guaranteeing job stability and an increasing number of social protections. Moreover, given the progressive ageing of the population, the postulates underlying traditional financing of old age pensions are no longer valid. Indeed, demographic studies show that the elderly will represent in 2025 nearly one third of the population.

Nonetheless, to diagnose changes, however radical they might be, does not necessarily entail that the only possible solution is an equally radical reduction of labour costs coupled with the introduction of maximum flexibility with respect to the organisation of enterprises. As seducing as these formulae might seem, they do not solve the problems brought about by the above-mentioned changes. On the contrary, these problems can be aggravated by such measures. Thus, as was shown by the experiences developed in The Netherlands, a systematic reliance on

part-time work can result in an accrued deskilling of workers. Similarly, the re-appearance of commercial agreements simply causes risks to be transferred, by having an already overcharged public administration actually take on responsibility for them as a last resort.

It seems necessary, given these predicaments, to not only recall that competitiveness and the enterprises' aptness for innovating essentially depend on the degree to which workers identify with their work, but also that one needs to contrast purely "economic" solutions with approaches aiming at a rediscovery of the "social". Thus, while it is necessary to recognise the importance of a new approach with respect to working hours and, particularly, the institutionalisation of part-time work, it is necessary that the legal framework proper to employment be changed so that, on the one hand, we might render work as flexible as possible and, on the other hand, guarantee a minimum security with respect to employment. Moreover, it is also extremely important to reconsider the form and structure of collective bargaining agreements and to ask ourselves how can these be adapted to the specific needs of individual enterprises - at the same time that the decision-making process is to a large degree transferred to the workers directly concerned.


In conclusion, and to cite a final example, it is necessary to revise the legislator's function. To state that the modernisation of labour organisation is above all the task of social partners, is not tantamount to saying that legislators are reduced to simple roles as onlookers. The crucial role played by legislators has been demonstrated by the lessons learned from the multiple attempts towards overcoming discrimination and promoting real equality between men and women, as from those concerning the problems stemming from the increasing number of elderly workers and their integration into the organisation of labour.

The meeting in Corfu answers to a double aspiration :

It aims at providing an outline of the current situation, not through abstract and general issues but by discussing concrete aspects. Problems can be identified and studied in the smallest detail through the repercussions of the economy's globalisation, changes in the conditions of labour, the analysis of the economic and social consequences of Internet and Intranet on enterprises and the limitations of the pact between generations.

It wants the actors involved to compare their perspectives. These will comprise politicians, scientists (economists, lawyers, sociologists), trade unionists and enterprise managers accepting to explore together the ways and means of an economic and social "new deal" for the European society of the 21st century.

THE MEETING'S PROGRAMME



The meeting will take place following the guidelines provided by the programme presented below. This will be finalised before February 28th, 1998, upon the reception of confirmation of the participants' presence by the organisers.

Friday morning, September 18

I. OPENING SESSION

► Objectives : .

11.00 ► Explain the meeting's topic, lay out its economic and social dimensions, set forth the ambition to have a global approach

13.30 ► Introduce the various categories of actors invited to participate, pointing out the variety of opinions present

► Development :

1. Opening Speech by Mr. Costas SIMITIS, Prime Minister of Greece

2. Address by Mr. Jacques SANTER, President of the European Commission

3. Keynote speech by Bernard BRUNHES on the meeting's stakes and agenda

**Round
Table**

The European Model of Development: Conditions and Perspectives

► Three Approaches - economic, legal and sociological:

- Mr. Allan LARSSON, Director General of DG V, European Commission
- Prof. Spiros SIMITIS, Professor, University of Frankfurt, Germany
- Mr. Pierre ROSANVALLON, Director for Studies, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales - France -

► Reactions by three types of actors (a politician, an employer, a trade unionist) :

- Mr. Jean-Claude JUNCKER, Prime Minister of Luxemburg
- Mr. John MONKS, President of the T.U.C., the United Kingdom
- Mr. Georges JACOBS, President honorary of Union Chimique Belge - Belgium

Friday afternoon, September 18

II. FIRST WORK SESSION

1st Topic

A Globalised Economy... And How About Globalised Social Issues?

♦ **Chairman:** Professor MEISSNER, President of the University of Frankfurt, Germany

♦ **Speakers :**

- 15.30
17.15
- ♦ Mr. Robert REICH, Former Secretary for Labour, The United States
 - ♦ Mr. Michel HANSENNE, Director General of the ILO
 - ♦ Mr. Fritz VERTZETNISCH, President of the ETUC, Austria
 - ♦ Mr. Percy BARNEVIK, Chairman of the Board of AESA BROWN BOVERI, Sweden

2nd Topic

Internet/Intranet : Towards new corporate relations

- The effects of INTERNET and INTRANET:
- on management methods
- on the influence of trade unions
- with respect to generating innovation...

♦ **Chairman:** Mr. Luc SOETE, director of M.E.R.I.T., Belgium

♦ **Speakers:**

- 18.00
19.45
- ♦ Prof. Manuel CASTELLS, Professor at the University of Berkeley, USA
 - ♦ Mrs. Gunnel FÄRM, President of the Swedish Council for Work Life Research, Sweden
 - ♦ Mr. Lars RAMQUIST, Chairman of the Board of Ericsson, Sweden
 - ♦ Mr. Stephen HUGHES, chairman of the employment and Social Affairs Committee, European Parliament

Friday evening, September 18

III - DINNER

► The Social Dimension of Europe : Opportunities and Perspectives

- Address by the President of the European Council

Saturday morning, September 19

IV – SECOND WORKING SESSION

3rd. Topic

The Future of Work

- Are we all entrepreneurs?
- From time criteria to task or result criteria: Towards commercial agreements?
- Are "norms" becoming increasingly flexible?
- From traditional labour contracts to multi-employers contracts?

9.00
10.30

♦ **Chairman:** Professor KOUKIADIS, President of the Economic and Social Council of Greece

♦ **Speakers :**

- ♦ Prof. Alain SUPIOT, Professor at the University of Nantes, France
- ♦ Mr. Michele SPAVENTA, Managing Director of ZANUSSI, Italy
- ♦ Mr. Michael GEUNICH, Member of the Board of Directors of DGB, Germany
- ♦ Mr. Ad MELKERT, Minister of Social Affairs, The Netherlands

4th. Topic

The Pact between Generations and the Management of Time

- A demographic change requiring new types of solidarity between generations
- Life cycles from the vantage-point of social issues
- Social Protection Systems
- Educational Systems

11.00
13.30

♦ **Chairman:** Prof. Alan Walker, Professor at the University of Sheffield

♦ **Speakers :**

- ♦ Prof. Tiziano TREU, Minister of Employment and Social Security, Italy
- ♦ Mr. Joakim PALME, Swedish Institute for Social Research, Sweden
- ♦ Mrs. Andrea FISCHER, Member of the European Parliament, Germany-
- ♦ Mrs. Nicole NOTAT, Secretary General of the CFDT, France

Saturday afternoon , September 19

V. CONCLUSIONS

- 15.30 **Synthesis**
 16.15 ♦ Mr. Jean BOISSONNAT, France

**Round
table**

A « new deal » for Europe

- ♦ **Chairman** : Mr. Jacques DELORS, former President of the European Commission

♦ **Speakers**

- 16.30 ♦ Mr. Etienne DAVIGNON, Chairman of the Board, Société Générale de Banque, Belgium
 17.45 ♦ Mr Anthony GIDDENS, Director of the London School of Economics, The United Kingdom
 ♦ Prof. Alvaro ESPINA, Economist, former Secretary of State,
 ♦ Mr. Peter CASSELS, President of ICTU, Ireland
 ♦ Mrs Maria JOAO RODRIGUEZ, Former Minister of Labour, Portugal -

► **Closing address**

- 18.00 ♦ Mr. Pádraig FLYNN, Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission
 ♦ Mr. Gil ROBLES GIL DELGADO, President of the European Parliament