1. The social dimension of European citizenship

Everyone agrees that the European Union has wider and more fundamental relevance than a Common Market. Many talk, in vague terms, of adding a social dimension to Europe, or of the 'European social model'.

For us on the Left, the "social dimension of European Citizenship" was never an empty generalization. Being founded on values, it always had specific content and implied specific courses of action.

Allow me to dwell on two key features:

Firstly, for us, social policy is conducted and takes place for the benefit of *all* in society, and not just for the immediate recipients. To achieve this, social policy must be inclusive; it must be an entitlement and not a privilege.

Striving to ensure high quality in social services and in social policy amounts to convincing citizens of the quality and benefits of being a part of society. Striving for

higher quality in social services is an investment in the quality of European citizenship and European democracy. Inclusiveness then follows as an automatic corollary.

Secondly, for us, social policy is not something static, not a museum piece. In the context of a world that is constantly changing, it must be open to reappraisal and change. The planning of social policy must be sensitive to new needs that emerge, but must also stand ready to examine the new solutions and the new potential that become feasible.

An example would be the need of attention to those of working age and to the problems of those who work. Social policy used to be directed to those entering the labor market –education – and those leaving it – pensions. Yet, developments in both economy and society mean that

- there is need for training and life-long learning for those switching career,
- there is need for child care to help women in their family responsibilities,
- poverty should not lead to vicious cycles of deprivation.

Success in these aims implies that the task of addressing other challenges, such as ageing, is made much easier.

These two examples show that *our* notion of the social dimension of citizenship *does* translate to concrete action: in an emphasis on social expenditure, in the promotion of new social programs, in investing in institutional capacity building.

2. Sustainable development

(οι τελευταίες 2 παράγραφοι αποτελούν την ουσία της παρέμβασης)

To us, European Social Democrats, sustainable development is a necessity

□ if we are to achieve solidarity between generations,

□ if we are to realize our vision of a secure and healthy environment with full employment and prosperity for all our citizens, regardless of gender, race or religion.

We should think of sustainability as an instrument that will spread, equally across society, the positive aspects of globalization.

Sustainability requires citizens' active involvement as well as co-operative and coordinated efforts at all levels, local, regional, national and global. It requires political leadership and a renewed commitment to our social vision for the civil society. It also requires global leadership, since current unsustainable trends have to be abandoned at both the national and the international level.

The use of new, green, technologies, the decoupling of economic growth and rates of growth from environmental degradation, the stability of world commodity prices, are

undoubtedly important factors for sustainable development.

Moreover, our policies must properly take into account the reality that countries and regions are at different levels of development. We want a true "<u>environmental democracy</u>". Often times, targets specified in terms of rates of change are harder to meet, if the starting levels are lower. In such instances, the pursuit of a more sustainable development path may be interpreted as carrying a cost in terms of growth and prosperity, or as a burden unevenly distributed between countries and regions.

"Environmental democracy" is about environmental solidarity, a concept addressing the issue of different starting points. It compensates for late entry into the development process.