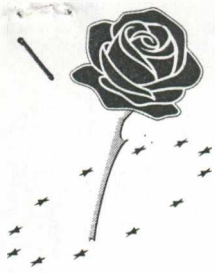


t: PES



The President

ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΑ ΠΡΟΕΥΘΥΝΟΥ
ΠΑΡΕΛΗΘΩΝ
ΑΘΗΝΑ 18-6-03/Υ327

A. Depraes

Brussels, 11 June 2003

Prime Minister Constantine Simitis
Hellenic Republic
Maximos Mansion
Herodou Attikou 19
Athens 10674
Greece
Fax no:

Dear *Kostas,*

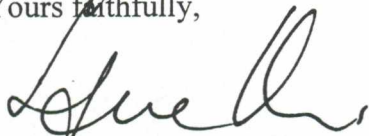
Re: Working conditions of temporary agency workers

EU ministers of Social Affairs failed again on the third of June to reach agreement on the Temporary Agency Workers Directive. The blocking minority of four Member States (UK, Germany, Ireland and Denmark) continued to stifle progress, despite efforts of the Greek Presidency to offer far reaching compromises. As you will certainly know, the blocking minority demands a permanent exemption for temporary agency work of less than six months, which would mean that the vast majority of temporary workers will fall outside the scope of the equal treatment provisions in the directive. We cannot accept a two-tier workforce system in Europe, with agency workers left vulnerable and exposed. Following the European Parliament's proposals the other 11 Member States were ready to offer transitional provisions, but this was declined.

The PES Group in the European Parliament considers this failure to be a missed opportunity, which could represent a deadlock for the directive, and for European social legislation in general. This is most unfortunate considering that two PSE governments are at the centre of this deadlock. We share Commissioner Diamantopoulou's profound disappointment. This Directive is a very important piece of European social legislation and is an integral part of the aim of the Lisbon strategy: to reinforce Europe's competitive strength, while delivering more and better jobs. The European Parliament agreed on a balanced proposal last autumn that is acceptable to 11 of the 15 Member States. We believe that it is imperative to promote the right balance between protection of temporary workers and the creation of flexible labour markets in Europe.

We put our hopes on the Greek Presidency's willingness to raise the issue at the Thessaloniki Summit (20/21 June 2003), and we also call on the government leaders involved to take the opportunity to create a competitive European Union with full and better employment, and increased social cohesion.

Yours faithfully,



~~Enrique Barón Crespo~~

c.c. Rt. Hon. A. Blair
Chancellor Schröder