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Subject: Moves to strengthen EU Constitution on social issues

News from the PES in the Convention

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PES AIMS TO BEEF UP EU CONSTITUTION ON SOCIAL ISSUES

The Party of European Socialists will this week lead moves to beef up the social dimension of a new EU constitution. Members of the PES caucus in the Convention on the Future of Europe have tabled more than 180 amendments to the first 16 articles of the draft text and are to seek their adoption at the Convention meeting on Thursday and Friday this week.

PES leader in the Convention Giuliano Amato identified 'three connected areas' covered by the mainstream of the PES amendments:

1. Solidarity, social justice, equality between men and women and regional, not just social, cohesion. These points, said Mr Amato, are 'even more stressed than they already are in the articles on values and objectives';
2. Coordination of national policies at European level to give social and employment policies what Mr Amato called 'the same dignity and importance that is currently given to the coordination of economic policies.'
3. Enrichment of the range of shared competences by amendments on employment, industry, public services, promotion of equality between men and women and territorial cohesion.

Mr Amato pointed out that a number of the amendments express similar concepts in different words or seek linguistic improvements. He added: 'There is a mainstream but there are also some specificities. It is undeniable that most of the British amendments reflect their attention to member states' prerogatives while the others generally are aimed at strengthening the Union.

'Equally undeniable is that amendments on religious matters are very much a minority.'

The PES caucus, said Mr Amato, would support other amendments 'that more widely reflect the common positions of the socialists.'

end