

## **Constantinos Simitis**

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### **NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SOCIALIST GROUP**

**20 October 2005: Contact Tony Robinson**

#### **EIGHT-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR THE EU'S SOCIAL SUMMIT**

Socialist Euro MPs today set out an eight-point plan to boost people's quality of life and restore public faith in the European Union.

In a message to next week's Social Summit of EU heads of state and government in Hampton Court, the Socialist Group claims that better social policy could make "a decisive contribution to Europe's economic success."

The full text of the message is available on the Socialist Group website – [www.socialistgroup.org](http://www.socialistgroup.org).  
 The message calls for:

- Investment by the EU — including a €7 billion Industrial Restructuring Fund — to help regions and industries to cope with shifting trade patterns,
- Action to help the 70 million people at risk of poverty in EU countries, especially in the ten new member states;
- Measures to ensure that people whose jobs disappear can find retraining and new jobs quickly. A strong public service sector and better social protection should be part of the package;
- Connection of job centres across Europe and encouragement of more mobility in the EU workforce, along with investment in stepping up the move to a knowledge-based society, must be backed by "a budget fit for the 21st century"
- Eradication of barriers to women's employment through stronger measures on equal pay, better child care, challenging Europe's long hours culture and action on directives aimed at improving employment rights;
- Encouragement for older workers to stay at work and guarantees of a decent pension for all;
- Coordination of policy in members states on the integration of ethnic minorities and immigrant communities; and
- Promotion worldwide of the values of the EU social model to promote core labour standards.

Said Socialist Group vice-president Harlem Désir, who was responsible for drafting the message to the Summit: "We call on Europe's leaders to agree rapidly on new financial perspectives which measure up fully to the ambitions of the Lisbon Strategy. We also draw attention to the erosion of the tax base as a threat which must be tackled."

Said Socialist Group leader Martin Schulz: "We cannot compete with the low salaries, low health care, low social standards of Africa and Asia. This would destroy the European social model."

"We cannot safeguard the European economy by destroying European society and social standards.

"The growth we need in Europe will not be sustainable without a coordinated and simultaneous European investment strategy, focussed on high quality public expenditure on human capital, research and development and education, childcare and social services."  
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