



**UNICE**

Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe  
Union des Confédérations de l'Industrie et des Employeurs d'Europe

**UNION OF INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATIONS OF EUROPE  
EUROPEAN CENTRE OF ENTERPRISES WITH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND  
OF ENTERPRISES OF GENERAL ECONOMIC INTEREST  
EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION**

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**European Social Partners declaration to the Cologne European Council**

1. In view of their deep concern with the high level and persistence of unemployment in Europe, UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP and the ETUC have consistently supported the development of an integrated and co-ordinated European employment strategy. They accordingly welcome the reaffirmation by the Vienna European Council in December 1998 that employment is the top priority of the European Union.
2. The Vienna Summit also asked that a report be prepared for the Cologne Council (June 1999) on the development of a European Employment Pact, and called for “increased involvement and responsibility of the social partners”.
3. The European Social Partners can broadly agree with the proposals submitted by the German presidency, and in particular that the Cologne summit should aim to lay the foundations for a process, which has three objectives:
  - to improve the Luxembourg employment strategy and its implementation,
  - to improve competitiveness and the functioning of goods, services and capital markets in line with the June 1998 Cardiff summit conclusions,
  - to promote growth and employment while maintaining price stability, through good interaction between budgetary policy, monetary policy and wage developments at the macroeconomic level.
4. With regard to their involvement in the Luxembourg employment process, the European Social Partners have recently concluded a framework agreement on fixed term contracts. They have adopted a joint declaration on the employment of disabled workers. They are examining together initiatives taken by the social partners in the Member States, particularly in the light of the balances struck between flexibility and security, and starting from these practical experiences they will seek to identify factors for success in time for the December 1999 review in Helsinki. And currently they are identifying further themes for discussion within the Social Dialogue.

5. With regard to the Cardiff structural reform process, the European Social Partners recognise that the issues covered are important for competitiveness and employment, and trust therefore that in the future they will be involved in its development.
  6. With regard to the proposed macroeconomic process, the European Social Partners stress that the autonomy of each of the parties concerned must be respected, and that the objective should be to exchange information - not to enter into binding commitments - in order to ensure that each party, in deciding its own actions, is in a position to take account of the thinking and intentions of the other parties.
  7. The European Social Partners stand ready to discuss with representatives of Member States, the Council, the Commission and the European Central Bank the practical modalities of the proposed macroeconomic process.
  8. The European Social Partners are conscious of the need to promote coherence between these employment, structural reform and macroeconomic processes. Accordingly, they welcome the Council Decision that the Standing Committee on Employment should be a forum for continuous dialogue, concertation and consultation between the Council, Commission and the Social Partners on the co-ordinated employment strategy, taking into account the economic and social objectives of the Community as reflected in both the Employment Guidelines and the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines.
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