



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 28 November 2002

EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS PRESENT THEIR WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE 2003-2005

Today, the highest representatives of ETUC, representing trade unions on the one hand, and UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP representing employers on the other hand, met in the Social Dialogue Summit to present the work programme 2003-2005. The summit was attended by national social partners of 30 European countries including the candidate countries. The work programme, whose ultimate objective is to contribute to the Lisbon Strategy, promote employment and to pave the way for enlargement, follows up on a joint declaration to the Laeken Council in December 2001.

At the end of the Social Dialogue Summit, the secretaries general of the European Social partners' organisations presented this ambitious work programme covering a period of three years at a press conference.

The well structured work programme presents a remarkable innovation in the European social dialogue compared with the past. It moves away from the practice which consisted in deciding:

- whether to deal with an issue in the social dialogue on a purely case-by-case basis,
- at the same time whether to deal with an issue jointly and how to deal with it (through a joint opinion, an agreement or another tool).

It identifies three main priorities: employment, mobility and enlargement. These priorities are then broken into specific issues on which the social partners engage to work together in order to decide what is the best tool to address these issues at European level.

"The new work method shows that, following 17 years of experience, the European social dialogue has matured and is moving into a more autonomous phase. Our work programme also sends a strong signal to the Convention on the future of Europe regarding the central role played by social partners in Europe's social governance" concluded the secretaries general.

The full work programme is attached to this Press Release.

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