



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 23 March 2006

EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS PRESENT THEIR WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE 2006-2008

Today, on the occasion of the Tripartite Social Summit ETUC, UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP presented the new EU social dialogue work programme for 2006-2008. The aim of this work programme is to contribute to growth, jobs and the modernisation of the EU social model.

The work programme 2006-2008 is the second multi-annual work programme of the EU social dialogue. It reflects a joint wish to further establish the social partners' autonomy and builds on the achievements of the previous programme, which covered the period 2003-2005.

The EU social dialogue work programme 2006-2008 includes a joint analysis of the key challenges facing Europe's labour markets, the negotiation of a framework of actions on employment and one autonomous framework agreement. Other initiatives include studies on restructuring in the EU, capacity building for the social dialogue in new Member States and candidate countries and the development of a common understanding of social dialogue instruments. The full text of the work programme is annexed.

In addition, ETUC, CEEP and UNICE/UEAPME presented the fourth and final report on the follow up to their framework of actions on life long learning.

"For ETUC this work programme represents a new phase in the autonomous social dialogue process, where the social partners ensure that the impact of their joint actions makes a real difference to workers and companies alike. In this respect, the engagement of all parties is key" recalled Candido Mendez, President of ETUC.

"For employers this work programme is very important. What matters now is to put words into action. The content of each joint initiative should be assessed against one criterium: does it improve employment prospects in Europe ?" highlighted UNICE's President, Mr Seillière.

"When dealing with the concerns of Europe's workers and employers, we must not forget that most European companies are SMEs." added UEAPME's President, Mr Reckinger

"Good implementation of this programme by our members will be the sign that we succeeded in providing relevant answers to major employment and social challenges", concluded CEEP's President, Mr Einem