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## Declaration of the EPSU Executive Committee on a Social European Union

*Adopted by the EPSU Executive Committee, 7 June 2005*

Ten EU Member States have ratified the EU Constitutional Treaty, whereas the citizens of France and the Netherlands have rejected the Constitutional Treaty.

The EPSU Executive Committee meeting on 7 June 2005 in Brussels, believes that the increasing disenchantment of Europe's citizens and workers with the European integration process is due to two factors:

1. The collective abdication of responsibility by EU Ministers in the decision-making process.
  2. The extremely neo-liberal political orientation of the current Commission, which is also supported by many Member States' governments.
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1. The policy drift towards neo-liberalism has been taking place in the cocoon of Council of Ministers meetings for too long. National Government representatives have endorsed the 'economic primacy' agenda of the Commission at the expense of social and environmental development. However, **Ministers have taken this path under a veil of anonymity**. National political discourse is awash with a 'blame Brussels' culture, sometimes lead by the very Ministers responsible for those decisions. **The ease with which Ministers have avoided guilt by association for their own decisions has fostered a deep 'euro-cynicism' among citizens**. The neo-liberalism by stealth is further compounded by European Court of Justice rulings, steadily extending market regulations, within a policy vacuum.
  2. The **current Commission** promotes an extremely **neo-liberal political orientation** but is also supported by many Member States' governments. Examples are:
    - The Draft Services-Directive opening the door to social and wage dumping;
    - The proposal to change the Working Time Directive generalizing the possibilities of an opt-out, thus legalising the obligation of workers to stay in the workplace without remuneration, undermining workers' health and safety and collective agreements;
    - A Lisbon-Strategy focusing on competitiveness and the internal market to the detriment of the social and environmental pillars;
    - A Commission social policy agenda without any substantial legislative content;
    - A general policy of hard economic legislation crushing 'soft' social policy instruments.

*'A Further enlarged European Union cannot be built on internal market principles alone'*

The EPSU Executive Committee reiterates its fundamental conviction that a further enlarged European Union cannot be built on internal market principles alone. The European Union must be developed as a social, political, and economic Union.

The rejection of the Draft Constitutional Treaty must be understood as a political and social signal to European and national policy makers to reorient the construction of the European Union based on upward social harmonization, efficient and strong public services and the systematic involvement of trade unions and social partners.

An active employment policy must urgently lead to investments into public services and infrastructures, such as education, health and social services, transport. This requires also steps to avoid tax competition between Member States, the combating of tax evasion and tax fraud within the EU. A socially balanced European Union is indispensable in tackling the negative effects of globalization.

The events of 29 May and 1 June must force European and national politicians to take responsibility for their actions, to be held accountable, and to accept the link between European decisions and national consequences. The European Union must embrace social progress. Only then will it receive legitimacy by Europe's workers and citizens.