

## **Social Dialogue conference 13 March 2006**

CEMR and EPSU were invited to participate in the first conference, organised by the European Commission to discuss the future of the social dialogue and its role in the years ahead.

In his opening remarks, Commissioner Spidla stressed his interest in getting feedback from the social partners on how to face the challenges that we are facing in the EU, mainly linked to globalisation, enlargement and the demographic change.

A selection of social partners presented their experience in the areas of management of change, capacity building in the new Member States and the development of competences.

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, Secretary General of EPSU, spoke on behalf of the social sectoral dialogue committee of local and regional government, representing EPSU and CEMR. On the background of the study that was done in 2005, she presented the situation in the new member states and the candidate countries (link to the study; press release of the Budapest conference).

Mrs Fischbach-Pyttel explained that there are very diverse local and regional structures in these countries and a systematic social dialogue is not yet established everywhere.

In the debate, there was a common view of the social partners that the European Commission's initiative was most welcome and that it should continue to insist that social dialogue structures were to be established in all Member States, since it is a part of the 'acquis communautaire' and the Copenhagen criteria.

Commissioner Spidla said social dialogue is an instrument that helps to manage changes in the area of employment and confirmed his dedication to pursue the establishment of respective structures in the Member States and the candidate countries.

Read our study: [Strengthening social dialogue in the local and regional government sector in the 'new' Member States and candidate countries](#)

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