

Speech by Mr. Józef Oleksy, Representative of the Sejm of the Republic of  
Poland at the plenary session of the Convention,  
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The existing treaties already cover a wide range of social values and objectives. These are among others: social justice, social cohesion, gender equality, non-discrimination, social protection, employment. We need to preserve them if we want the European Union to be based on shared values and common interests.

But the Union is also rich by its diversity. That concerns also the variety of social models. Enlargement will further enrich this diversity. We should respect the need of adaptability of social systems if Member States are to maintain their competitiveness and high employment. Only economic development can guarantee that social rights are respected. That is why domestic and international regulation should not hinder economic activity.

A detailed regulation of social rights lays in the interest of those Member States that already guarantee a high level of social protection. For countries with lower productivity, the increased uniformity of social policy models poses a threat to the economic growth of their converging economies. The imposition of higher minimal standards on all Member States will reduce the comparative advantages of some of them.

The final report generally acknowledges some of the issues I have mentioned. I would still point out some of the specific questions.

***On values and objectives:***

- **Full employment is impossible to attain.** That is why “a high level of employment” seems to be a better and a more realistic formulation.
- **The promotion of the quality of jobs:** That raises the question of priorities. Promoting employment can – for poorer countries – prove to be more important as a general objective than the quality of jobs itself. If those countries do not have sufficient means at their disposal for promoting high quality employment – will they be in breach of the Constitution?

***On competences and decision-making:***

- In my view, current provisions as introduced by the Treaty of Nice should remain unchanged. They were subject to a balanced compromise. We should let these procedures work in practice before amending them. Especially, it would be premature to adopt by qualified majority voting with co-decision the minimal standards of social security and social protection.

***On the open method of coordination:***

- Flexibility of that instrument should be preserved as it represents one of its added values. If included in the constitution, the open method cannot lead to sanctions imposed on those Member States that will not fully stick to common goals.

***And finally, on the role of social partners:***

- I agree with the need to recognize and promote the importance of social dialogue in Europe. I think we should avoid provisions that favour certain models of social dialogue. Diverse traditions concerning the forms of social dialogue should be respected.