

Working Group XI

Working Document 31

Working Group XI “Social Europe”

Subject: **Comments on paragraphs 4 to 7 of the Mandate
by Mr Vytenis Andriukaitis**

Members of Working Group XI on “Social Europe” will find hereafter a paper by
Mr Vytenis Andriukaitis, member of the Convention.

Contribution by Mr. Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis,
Member of the Convention

To the working group on Social Europe

Question 4: What role could be given to the role of the open method of co-ordination and what would be its place in the Constitutional Treaty?

I support the introduction of the open method of co-ordination into the Constitutional Treaty. This new instrument provides for necessary flexibility so as to enable the member states to co-ordinate certain aspects of their social policies around common defined aims, benchmarks and guidelines, adopted by the Council on a proposal of the Commission.

To avoid a problem of democratic deficit, the open method of co-ordination, must be made more transparent and the European Parliament should be actively involved throughout the process. The European Parliament should set objectives, guidelines and indicators together with the Council. Representatives of respective committees of national parliaments could also be invited to take part in the process.

Question 5: What relationship can be established between the co-ordination of economic policies and the co-ordination of social policies?

The European social model should be promoted and protected. There must be a strong link between economic and social co-ordination. This will allow to use the economic potential of the Union in order to achieve full employment, a high level of social protection and realise the principle of solidarity by ensuring that people in all regions of the Union enjoy the same high quality of life.

Economic and social priorities should be set for the Union as a whole, with targets for economic, employment, social and environmental policy that member states are committed to achieve.

Question 6: Regarding procedures, to what extent should codecision and qualified majority voting be extended to matters for which unanimity is currently required?

Qualified majority voting by the Council should be a general rule. I support the idea of extending this rule into the social matters.

The matters provided for in Part 6 of Article 137, i.e., pay, the right of association, the right to strike, the right to impose lock-outs, which under the present scheme of regulation are within the exclusive competence of the members states may be left as an exception to the general rule.

Question 7: Title VI of the preliminary draft Constitutional Treaty deals with the democratic life of the Union. Should the role of the social partners appear in Title VI and, if so, what should this role be?

The principle of participatory democracy should be encouraged.

The role of trade unions, employer organisations and other social partners should be recognised in the Constitutional Treaty.

I support the idea of formalising the social tripartite summits prior to the spring meetings of the European Council.

Civil society should be granted the right to be consulted on legislation. For instance, I agree that social partners should be allowed to participate in comitology procedures in areas in which consultation with social partners is provided for by the Treaty.