

International call

Railwayman trade unionists for another Europe. No to the European constitution project!

The "Constitution" adopted by the European Union Heads of State and Government on June 18th, 2004 sets in stone a wide range of political, economic and social measures that should be debated as widely possible. This set of restrictive neo-liberal measures takes us in the direction of free-market rule, and free movement of capital and transnational corporations. This "Constitution" for the European Union boasts as one of its founding principle that of an *"open economic market where competition is free and undistorted"*.

This principle, at the very heart of EU treaties, fuels across Europe the attacks against public services and welfare rights, and encourages the lengthening of the working week and the greater flexibility of working conditions. The rights of workers, pensioners and the unemployed are being challenged. This is clearly shown by the draft EU Directive on working hours. Unemployment and poverty are on the rise due to these neo-liberal economic policies.

Despite the well-intentioned statements on the Services of Public Interest, this principle also allows for the introduction of competition and privatisation. It encourages relocation and social dumping as allowed for by the Bolkenstein draft Directive on the privatisation of services.

The Charter of Fundamental Rights has been included in the "Constitution". However, it does not allow for new European social measures to counter-balance free competition, which is the only real common requirement across the European Union. The "Constitutional Treaty" is unacceptable on many issues: it replaces the right to a job by only the opportunity to work, the right to strike at a European level is not recognised and it refuses equal rights for those European residents who are not nationals of one of the member states.

If the "Constitutional Treaty" is ratified, all 25 member states will have to unanimously agree in future any amendments. This will be virtually impossible to achieve. Therefore the choice of economic policies will escape from any public debate and democratic accountability. Any progressive social measures, including through improvements in the Charter of Fundamental Rights would become utopian.

State sovereignty is being handed over to undemocratic institutions such as the European commission or the European Central Bank. The latter maintains price control and freezes budgetary policies at the expense of public services, welfare benefits, wages and employment. This Europe is being constructed not in the open without popular participation but in closed back-room negotiations between governments.

This neo-liberal European Union support fosters dangerous reactionary and populist ideas, nationalism and the racist far right.

It is high time that we fight for a Europe that breaks from this predatory neo-liberalism, and which embraces social justice, peace, democracy, sustainable development and co-operation between the peoples in the world.

We are resolutely committed to a world and an Europe that fights unemployment, poverty and the deterioration of our environment. Welfare rights must be strengthened. Economic policies and taxation must be co-ordinated and harmonised for the benefit of people, not profit. Public services must be developed on a European scale to meet social need and not to support private corporations. Economic policies must be implemented which are committed to protecting environment. Positive rights, equality, and anti-discriminatory policies for all should

be adopted urgently. We aspire to a world, and thus democratic Europe, and based on full citizenship for all its residents.

For such a Europe, which is so necessary, to become a reality, all citizens must be able to speak out. In all European countries, everybody must be consulted on their future. To open the road towards "another Europe", this "Constitutional Treaty" must be rejected and we must mobilise to fight for the rights of workers, pensioners and the unemployed in the construction of Europe.

From its bases even, the European Union is a supranational construction with the service of the financial capacity, able to enter in competition with the other similar zones on the international market thanks to its transnational corporations, what is clearly ratified in the current project of European Constitution.

This project of Constitution:

- make capitalism a constitutional principle,
- just like increase in the military expenditure within the framework of NATO,
- does not recognize like fundamental the rights and freedoms of the workers, as well on the place of work as in the company: right to strike, of association and trade-union activity, to health and safety with work, to have a work, with wages for a worthy life, with a retirement for a serene old age, with housing, with the equality of the sexes, with the freedom of thought, words, to preserve the environment and the ecosystem for the generations present and future.
- fact of disappearing any concept of public services to leave place with nebulous "services of general interest" subjected to competition,

Trade unionists, we cannot accept that.

These policies initially aim at déréguler the public services while derogating from the existing legal framework (law the labour, trade-union rights, environmental protection, public health, public education,

the most stripped social services with, etc.) and then with the privatiser, all that with the agreement and the complicity of the governments of the States.

This diagram of dismantling of social protection and deconstruction of the labour market is set up in an identical manner in the various countries:

- *Liberalization and privatizations.*
- *Flexibilisation of the working conditions.*
- *Précarisation.*
- *Lower budgets devoted to social protection.*
- *Degradation of the public services.*
- *Increase in the industrial accidents.*
- *Private management of the public inheritance.*
- *Delocalization of the companies.*
- *Increase in repression and restriction of freedoms.*
- *Maintenance of sexual discrimination.*

Railroads to the danger of liberalism.
The railroads are directly confronted with this situation, who is the consequence of

the state of the report/ratio of forces between the labour movement and those which want "to control the world".

European directives, with the "railway packages" which organize the liberalization of the traffics but also the decisions of our governments:

- privatizations of the railroads,
- separation between infrastructure and exploitation
- politic "commercial" increasingly turned towards the profit with the detriment of the satisfaction of the users,
- absence of measurement preventing the social dumping,
- social policy which through "management" privileges individualism,
... go in this direction.

We fight these orientations, and invite to organize a refusal of this "European constitution", a refusal on bases clearly internationalists and social !

Railwayman trade unionists for another Europe.

We invite to organize a refusal of this "European constitution", a refusal on bases clearly internationalists and social

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