



the round table

Key issues for European Socialists and Social Democrats

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Viennese Visions

'Something is happening. Social democrats are trying to make themselves more visible. They no longer consider themselves working individually but have become the political force of Europe which does not want to do away with nation states but know that challenges cannot be coped with using the instruments of nation states in future.'

*Rudolf Schapring,
President of the PES*

'The next century is a European century. It will be up to us how we shape it.'

*Rudolf Schapring,
President of the PES*

'We insist that the Charter be included in the Treaty and not put in the fridge.'

*Enrique Baron, Leader of
the EP Socialist Group.*

'Europe has to be more than the translation of national ideas to the European level. We have to provide a broader framework for the citizens of Europe.'

*Alfred Gusenbauer,
Leader of the Austrian
Social Democrats.*

Schroeder and Kok join in public debate

DOUBLE ACT

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Dutch Premier Wim Kok are to take part in a public debate on 'Europe's modern economy and the modern welfare state' in Amsterdam on Saturday 18 November.

The double act – with not just two premiers but also two hosts and two venues – is the latest in the European Socialist and Social

Democratic series of policy discussions in cities across Europe in preparation for next May's Berlin Congress of the Party of European Socialists.

In a 90-minute exchange with an invited audience, the two leaders will deal with such issues as provision of good-quality jobs in the information society and maintaining Europe's social fabric whilst modernising social protection.

The Amsterdam Round Table – the latest in a series launched in London in March – is hosted by the Dutch and German social democrats and co-organised with the Party of European Socialists, the European Parliament Socialist Group and its Dutch and German delegations.



Mr Schroeder is to interrupt official Netherlands visit for the debate

Discussions are open to the media throughout and begin at 17h15 on Friday 17 November in the Pulitzer Hotel, Prinsengracht 315-331, 1016 GZ Amsterdam. Talks on Saturday 18 November will be at the Koepelkerk of the Renaissance Hotel, Kattegat 1, 1012 SZ Amsterdam.

Senior national politicians taking part in the two days of discussion will include Labour leader in the

Dutch Parliament Ad Melkert, British e-commerce minister Patricia Hewitt, Greek defence minister and PES vice-president Akis Tsochatzopoulos, Swedish Industry minister Mona Sahlin and Dutch deputy foreign affairs minister Dick Benschop.

EU figures will include European Parliament So-
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Press in the Garden

Chancellor Schroeder and Dutch Premier Wim Kok will give a press conference from 11h30 to 12h00 at the Garden Room of the Renaissance Hotel, Amsterdam, on Saturday 18 November, immediately after the debate on the future of welfare.

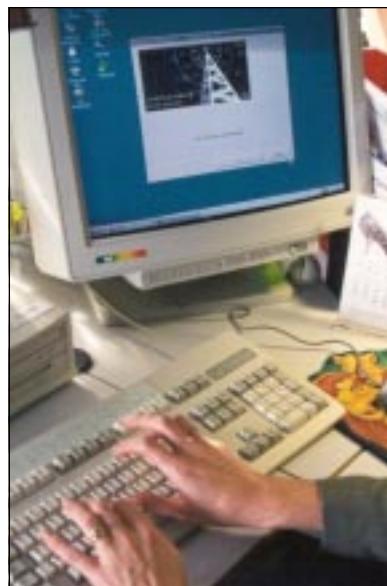
Jobs — But How Good?

Issues linked to three core questions posed by former Commission director general Allan Larsson are expected to influence debates at the Amsterdam and Stockholm Round Tables.

The questions Mr Larsson put to a Barcelona conference on 'The World of Labour in the 21st Century' are: Will there be enough work for all in the information society? Will there be enough trained workers for the jobs? And will there be decent work for all information society workers?

Describing Europe as 'built on two great economic and social thoughts' – competition between enterprises and solidarity between citizens – Mr Larsson tackles the first question by highlighting two reasons for Europe's economic underperformance: inability to handle macroeconomic shocks; and inability to handle structural transformation of the labour market.

He concludes: 'There can be



Will new jobs be tied to screens?

more, not fewer, jobs in Europe with the right policies. Globalisation is not an obstacle; we are not victims of overwhelming global forces. The problems

and solutions are all internal in Europe.'

He offers a warning rather than a clear answer to the second question: 'The population and the working age population are getting older while technology is getting younger.' The need, he says, is 'to bring demographic developments and the development of the Information Society together in a positive, mutually beneficial way.'

On the final question, Mr Larsson points to the 'strong contractual and legal framework' in EU labour markets as well as 'a broad and continuing consensus for maintaining a strong element of security.'

He says: 'The content of that socio-economic framework must be reformed to continue to serve us well, as we move to the next phase of working life, the Information Society.'

'This does not mean deregulation. It does mean finding a new balance between flexibility and security, one that allows us to speed up change in technology and at the same time create a new security, security in change, based more on springboards to new skills and new jobs than just social safety nets.'

Detail of the Dutch Double Act

German Social Democrat leader in the European Parliament Martin Schulz will open the Amsterdam Round Table at 17h30 on Friday 17 November after which the first panel discussion – from 17h50 to 19h50 – will focus on 'Modern European Social Democracy: Strengthening the economy and its social fabric.'

Professor Jelle Visser of Amsterdam University will present an introductory paper. Four panellists will then lead a debate chaired by PES vice-president and Dutch Euro MP Jan Marinus Wiersma. The panelists are: Roger Liddle, adviser to British Premier Tony Blair; Michael Tober of Poland's Democratic Left Alliance; Germa Bel, the Spanish Socialist MP; and Yon nec Polet, Secretary General of ECOSY, the European Community Organisation of Socialist Youth.

The first day's discussions conclude with an official dinner at which speakers will include Dutch

deputy foreign affairs minister Dick Benschop, EP Socialist Group leader Enrique Baron, Amsterdam mayor Schelto Patijn and Dutch Labour delegation leader in the EP Max van den Berg.

Labour leader in the Dutch Parliament Ad Melkert is to open discussions on Saturday 18 November in Koepelkerk of the Renaissance Hotel, Amsterdam, at 09h45.

Mr Schroeder and Mr Kok will take part in the public debate, chaired by *Algemeen Dagblad* journalist Oscar Garschagen, from 10h00 to 11h30.

Participants in the closing panel discussion – from 12h00 to 13h30 – will include British e-commerce minister Patricia Hewitt, Swedish Industry minister Mona Sahlin, Dutch entrepreneur Monique van Dusseldorp, German trade union IG-Chemie representative Hubertos Schmoldt and Dutch MEP Ieke van den Burg.

milan morsels

'Today the democratic battle is a media battle.' Raimon Obiols, Spanish MEP.

Double Act

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cialist Group leader Enrique Baron, PES Vice-President Jan Marinus Wiersma and the Dutch and German delegation leaders in the European Parliament Socialist Group, Max van den Berg and Martin Schulz.

Other key speakers will include Roger Liddle, adviser to British Premier Tony Blair, Michael Tober of Poland's Democratic Left Alliance, Professor Jelle Visser of Amsterdam University and Amsterdam mayor Schelto Patijn.

EU Media Action Urged

A call from Italian Democratic Socialist leader Walter Veltroni for a new EU Media directive – going beyond the existing TV Without Frontiers and with some degree of regulation at European level – was echoed by many contributors to the Milan Round Table.

But Socialist Group media affairs spokeswoman Barbara O'Toole said a debate was continuing among Socialists and Social Democrats in Europe as to whether European or national regulation was the best way forward.

Said Mr Veltroni, who is to take the cause of a new directive forward in the EP: 'The problem of concentration is a serious one. There is a risk that the circle will close and that two or three people will emerge as the owners of European communication.

'We need a European policy in this field. We need a new media directive going beyond Television without Frontiers.

'We need in this framework a specific anti-trust role at European level – not just to apply competition rules but also to consider that a dominant position in itself is a danger for expression and development of opinions.'

Italy's communications minister Vincenzo Vita admitted that when he proposed the creation of a European



Surrounded by mass media: Veltroni meets the media in Milan

Communications Authority at the Telecoms Council in May, he was given 'a cold reception' by the Commission and ministerial colleagues.

He said a European authority was 'a project that should be devised with the greatest care.' He proposed an 'intermediate step' of a draft directive on 'ownership, transparency and conflicts of interests.'

Socialist Group media affairs spokeswoman Barbara O'Toole said the Party of European Socialists was engaged in a

debate on whether there should be European regulation or, as German colleagues believed, national regulatory bodies. The Group's policy on regulation was to distinguish between content and transmission, she added.

Ms O'Toole stressed the role of public service broadcasting as 'the glue of our society in the digital age.'

Renate Schroeder, President of the European Federation of Journalists, said: 'The global media system requires a global democratic response ...

'Global media are no bad thing per se – but global media organisations are bad to the extent that they are unaccountable and serve the interests of a wealthy and privileged minority.'

Journalism in Europe and the Global Market

The impact of globalisation on journalism is compared to centralised prior censorship in a paper by the International Federation of Journalists, circulated at the Milan Round Table.

The paper declares: 'When commercial interests are set against democratic or professional values, it is inevitable that the interests of the market take priority.'

Slamming a decline in journalism standards, investigative journalism and media addiction to tabloid values, the IFJ says: 'We see the eclipse of serious political and social debate in favour of tasteless voyeurism and prurient entertainment.'

It adds: 'With this commercialism and corporate control comes political bias regarding the content of the media. . . there is often a negative portrayal of

political activity, trade unionism, civic values and anti-market activities.'

'This form of manipulation of the media message may be subtle, but it is no less effective than centralised prior censorship. Ideas unpopular to media owners, advertisers and their

political friends are effectively silenced and inconvenient facts kept dark.'

The paper warns that the only way to generate viable media reform 'will be as part of a broad movement to diminish the anti-democratic elements of

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'In Africa, home cinema with surround sound is not a problem - getting a bowl of rice is the problem.' Walter Veltroni, DS Leader

globalisation and to create structures that will ensure wider recognition and respect for the cultural, professional and democratic dimensions of media activity.'

Charter "Is Cornerstone of EU Values"

The European Union is 'an instrument of civilisation and a community of values', PES President Rudolf Scharping told the Vienna Round Table. He called for a Europe of economic efficiency, social responsibility and provision for the future.

Mr Scharping denounced far Right parties for 'trying to conjure up fears' about the development of Europe. 'We rely on intelligence,' he said, 'but others rely on stupidity. We rely on courage where others rely on reservation.'

Austrian Social Democrat leader Alfred Gusenbauer called for a greater political profile for the European Union in daily life. He said: 'We can challenge anti-European movements and we can face up to economic globalisation if we are able to step up the political aspect of Europe.'

Socialist leader in the European Parliament Enrique Baron saw the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, to be adopted at the Nice Summit in December, as the cornerstone of European values.

German Bundestag President Wolfgang Thierse described peace as a core European value. 'The leitmotiv of European unification was a specific project for peace,' he said. But he warned: 'A common currency is not enough to set up a European civilisation. We need a framework of fundamental values and fundamental rights that are binding for all.'

He added: 'If we revitalise and



Scharping sets out his vision in Vienna

implement our fundamental values, then we will be able to give globalisation a European face.'

How Well Will Welfare Fare?

The Round Table programme reaches its northernmost venue – Stockholm – on 2 December with debates devoted to 'Globalisation and the Future of Welfare'.

Swedish Social Democratic delegation leader in the European Parliament Jan Andersson will open the discussions at 10h30 in the Andrakammarsalen room of Sweden's Parliament, the Riksdagen.

Deputy Prime Minister Lena Hjelm-Walløn will be a keynote speaker in the opening session on 'EU enlargement and the future of welfare'. Other speakers will include Professor Micheal Ellman of Amsterdam University, Renate Langewiescher of the European Trade Union Institute and German

Euro MP Harald Ettl.

A press conference will be given at 13h00 after which journalists are invited to join participants at a buffet lunch.

Urusula Berge, head of the radical thinktank Agora, will lead the final discussion

on 'Globalisation and the future of welfare'.

Speakers in the debate will include the distinguished Swedish social scientist Joakim Palme, son of murdered Swedish premier Olaf Palme, former President of the European Court of Auditors Antoni Castells and Euro MPs Anne Van Lancker of Belgium and Antonio Segurro of Portugal.

The meeting concludes at 17h30.

How to obtain a regular copy of 'The Round Table'

'The Round Table' is a newsletter published jointly by the Party of European Socialists and the Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists in the European Parliament.

The newsletter will provide advance information about upcoming discussions and summarise the key points of those that have taken place.

To obtain a regular copy of 'The Round Table' please fax Brussels +322-2849026 or e-mail the editor Tony Robinson – TRobinson@europarl.eu.int