



**Church & Society Commission
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19 June 2007

**Joint statement from the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of
European Churches (CEC) and Eurodiaconia**

**ENSURING SOCIAL RIGHTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE EU'S FUTURE:
CHURCHES AND DIACONAL ORGANISATIONS URGE EU MEMBER STATES
TO MAINTAIN THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL TREATY**

European Churches and diaconal organisations ask the Heads of State or Government to maintain the social dimension of the Constitutional Treaty when they meet on 21-22 June in Brussels to take key decisions on the future of the Constitutional Treaty.

Churches and diaconal organisations support the reiterated commitment of EU Member States to strengthen the social dimension of EU policies, as highlighted in the Conclusions of the Spring European Council in March 2007. They point out the need for a better balance between economic, social and environmental policies, in which social and environmental policies are an integrated part of overall policy and not simply an addendum to economic policy.

In the Constitutional Treaty, which was signed by the European Heads of State or Government in October 2004, the EU Member States committed themselves to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion, and a high level of education, training and protection of human health (art III-117). For the Church and Society Commission of CEC and Eurodiaconia these are essential elements for social cohesion, which must be kept in any future Treaty of the European Union.

The Church and Society Commission of CEC and Eurodiaconia stress the importance of a legally binding reference to fundamental rights in any future treaty, sharing what the representatives of European governments once stated in the

context of the Council of Europe: "Rights provide the firmest foundation for social policy. Rights put all members of society on an equal footing. With a basis in human rights, the action of the State in the social policy field is no longer a matter of charity or welfare directed at the less fortunate members of society; it is a question of guaranteeing rights that are the same for all."¹

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***The Church and Society Commission (CSC)** is one of the commissions of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The CSC links CEC's some 125 member churches from all over Europe and its associated organisations with the European Union's institutions, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, NATO and the UN (on European matters). Its task is to help the churches study church and society questions from a theological social-ethical perspective, especially those with a European dimension, and to represent common positions of the member churches in their relations with political institutions working in Europe.*

***Eurodiaconia** is a federation of 32 members - churches, non-statutory welfare organisations and NGOs in Europe - operating at national and international level. Our members are rooted in Christian faith within the traditions of the Reformation as well as in the Anglican and Orthodox traditions. We network diaconal and social work of institutions and church communities and co-operate with civil society partners.*

Our Mission: We link our members to serve for solidarity and justice. Our strategic aims are to ensure quality of life for all in a social Europe, to link institutions of diaconia, social initiatives and churches in Europe, to be and to enhance a network of competence.

Eurodiaconia and the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) have a joint Social Policy working group.

¹ Council of Europe's European Committee for Social Cohesion on 31 March 2004 (CDCS (2004) 10, p. 4.