



Motion on the rejection of the Bolkestein Directive at the EMCEF congress, 8 –10 June 2004

European Commissioner Frits Bolkestein has presented a proposal aimed at eliminating all national regulations that obstruct freedom of establishment and free movement of services. In his opinion, liberalisation of the service sector is the key factor for growth, the creation of new jobs and the future of Europe.

This proposal would result in a Europe of social competition in which "creative" employers delocalise to the country with the lowest fiscal, social and environmental requirements where they create "letter-box companies" which, on the basis of the country of origin principle, are then able to extend their activities to the entire territory of the European Union with unbeatable conditions.

This draft directive is unacceptable because it produces considerable risks:

- Destruction of the labour market in European;
- Deregulation of employee rights;
- Economic, social and environmental dumping;
- A threat to the survival of high quality public services;
- Subordination of social security to market laws;
- A threat to employee health and safety regulations.

By abolishing authorisation systems, the directive aims at dismantling social and democratic achievements, which were democratically decided by the elected representatives of the people or established through collective bargaining.

We cannot accept an ultra-liberal Europe that is subservient to nothing but the laws of the market and treats employees as mere commodities, and where restructuring, redundancies and delocalisation are the key terms.

What we want is a strong social Europe which offers everybody high-quality employment and an upward harmonisation of working conditions in the European Union.

We want the enlarged Europe to be "our Europe" and we want employees of all countries to be able to hope for better living and working conditions without being played off against each other.

Only a broad social coalition will be able to stop this reform and save Europe from failure. To do this, we, more than ever, need a strong ETUC and a true trade union counterweight at the European level. EMCEF will contribute to this with all its force.