



PRESS

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International Conference "Social Pacts – a Chance to achieve Success"
Warsaw (Poland), 24 January 2007

Poland embarks on a national debate on the future of social pacts

The international conference "Social Pacts – a Chance to achieve Success" which took place in the Polish Parliament in Warsaw on 24 January was opened by Jarosław Kaczyński, Polish Prime Minister, Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Kalata, the Minister for Labour, Jan Olsson, member of the EESC Social Affairs Section and Valerio Salvatore, the president of the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions.

In his introductory speech, Mr Olsson (Group III, Sweden) asked: 'the social dialogue is at a crossroads – will it continue to be of the same importance as before in a world in which there are large and rapid social changes?' He continued; 'more involvement of citizens is needed to realise the aspirations of society and to manage the changes in efficient and sustained manner. The social dialogue based on autonomous partners together with the civil dialogue involving NGOs and interest organisations are the corner stone of participatory democracy and empowerment which are essential in making policies a success, both at national and European level.' Referring to the Lisbon Agenda, Mr Olsson underlined that at national levels social pacts should focus on five principles: gender equality, managing change, flexicurity, life long learning and combating social exclusion. The debate on social pacts should take stock of grass-roots reality and have a bottom-up approach in order to involve citizens who are, in turn, the beneficiaries.

The conference brought together the government, social partners, international guests and other stakeholders. The event inaugurated a national debate on the necessity to come up with a social pact in order to facilitate adjustment to economic change in Poland. The European Economic and Social Committee was represented also by Mr Marian Krzaklewski (Group II, Poland), member of the Consultative commission on industrial change (CCMI) and the EESC's Sections for Transport and for Economic Affairs and Mr Patrik Zoltvany (Group I, Slovakia), member of the EESC's Sections for External Relations, Transport and Energy and Agriculture.

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The European Economic and Social Committee represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. It is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Its consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the Community decision-making process. The Committee has 317 members. Its members are appointed by the Council.