

# European Foundation on Social Quality



c/o SISWO

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To the main players of the  
Symposium on "The Europe of  
Citizens, towards social quality"  
prof. drs. Ed van Thijn (chair),  
prof. drs. Ruud Lubbers,  
mr George Debunne,  
mrs Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo  
mr Otto von der Gablentz  
mr Gyorgy Konrad.

**concerns:**

recent information and  
some suggestions

Amsterdam, May 29th, 1997



Dear colleagues,

On May 14th, 1997 we sent to all of you a letter with respect to the solemn presentation of the 'Amsterdam Declaration' on Tuesday, June 10th, 1997 at 3.00 pm in the 'Beurs van Berlage' and the symposium concerning this Declaration.

In this letter we gladly give you our suggestions with regard to your role in the symposium and the practical aspects of your participation.

With regard to the practical aspects we like to let you know that we arranged the Hotel Krasnapolsky on Tuesday night for mrs Maria de Lourdes, mr. George Debunne, mr. Gyorgy Konrad and mr. Otto von der Gablentz.

Furthermore, we invite all of you to be present during the official presentation of the 'Amsterdam Declaration' at 3.00 pm (see above). The hotel is a three minutes' walk from the Beurs of Berlage, the place of the presentation.

After the presentation we invite all of you to have a dinner with the other guests in the old 'Doelenzaal' of the Universiteit van Amsterdam, circa 5.30 pm. The Doelenzaal is situated next to the Lutheran Church, the place of the symposium (Singel 411) and is within eight minutes walking distance from the Beurs van Berlage and the Hotel.

The festive symposium - with music and theatre - will begin at 8.00 pm in the Church or the Aula van Universiteit van Amsterdam.

In our letter from May 14th we proposed you to give an inspired speech (addressing circa three pages) to present the audience some points of departure on how to stimulate with all of us a Europe, based on human dignity, democratic relations and modern forms of solidarity".

Mr. Ed van Thijn will function as 'maitre de cérémonie'. He will introduce the speakers and he will organize the discussion. The programme is as follows:

- \* 8.00 pm opening by the chair,
- \* 8.05 pm lecture by mr. Ruud Lubbers,
- \* 8.15 pm lecture by mr. George Debunne,
- \* 8.25 pm lecture by mrs Maria des Lourdes Pintasilgo.
- \* 8.45 pm discussion
  
- \* 9.00 pm pause
  
- \* 9.30 pm lecture by mr Otto von der Gablentz,
- \* 9.40 pm lecture by mr Gyorgy Konrad,
- \* 10.00 pm discussion
- \* 10.30 pm end of discussion
  
- \* 11.30 pm end of festive symposium



As we wrote earlier we hope to publish a second book on "Debates on Social Quality". We hope we can use your lectures for this book. Of course you can use more pages than the three pages mentioned above. In order to present some new inspiration we like to give you some suggestions with the second book in mind. We will try different approaches for all of you. Your most essential point of departure may be the draft of the 'Amsterdam Declaration on social Quality', based on our first book. It is a pleasure to us to send you this draft as an appendix of this letter. On Tuesday, June 10th, we gladly will give you an exemplar of our book on the social quality of Europe. Our suggestions are as follows:

(1) With respect to mr. Ruud Lubbers' lecture. He has been invited to speak about the role of the political institutions on European level. The essence is the supposed recent democratic deficit of the European institutions. How can we stimulate greater transparency of political processes for citizens and stimulate a political climate in order to learn at what level we should cope with which questions? A central issue will be the role of the Inter-Governmental Conference seen in the light of the extension of the European Union.

(2) With respect to mr George Debunne's lecture. He has been invited to focus on questions of social communication in order to change the actual asymmetry between the position of (European) multinationals and organized (and non-organized) employees (and unemployed people) in the member states. How can we develop (and strengthen) a social dialogue in Europe and assist, for example, non-governmental organizations to play a role in the political and economic processes? Furthermore, the authors of the book on social quality plea for a bottom-up process to strengthen the position of the different regions in Europe. How can we stimulate local networks in order to assist this process.



(3) With respect to Mrs Maria des Lourdes Pintasilgo's lecture. She has been invited to address the underdevelopment of citizens rights in the European Union. How can we develop more fairness and social equity in Europe and start a process to make the Union a Europe of citizens and absolutely safe for minorities? Do we need a European constitution? What should be the role of the European Court of Justice seen in the light of this constitution?

(4) With respect to mr. Otto von der Gablentz' lecture. He has been invited to address the consequences on European level of the expending information technology. How to change the difference of use in society, causing new forms of inequalities and assymetry? In other words, how to stimulate new conditions for people of all social classes in order to develop their competence in order to stimulate the democratic quality of the member states and the European Union?

(5) With respect to Gyorgy Konrad's lecture. He will be invited to reflect upon the nature of the process of the so-called European integration (of its Westerns countries). The accent lies on homogenisation, economic and monetary imperatives and top-down based developments. But Europe is more than a continental context for new market games. It is most of all a "Kulturraum", characterized by the manifold, the differentiation and the diversity. What can be the role of the cultural dimension with respect to the processes of European unification? Will it function as a counter balance or will it be used as a decor for speeches and festive parties?

We hope these suggestions will deliver some points of departure with which to address the audience of this festive symposium.

With all the best wishes,

dr. Wolfgang Beck and  
dr. Laurent J.G. van der Maesen

Enclosed: draft of the 'Amsterdam Declaration'.

final version

**AMSTERDAM DECLARATION ON THE SOCIAL QUALITY OF EUROPE**

A decent respect for the fundamental dignity of all citizens requires us to affirm that we do not want to see growing numbers of beggars, tramps and homeless in the cities of Europe. Nor do we like a Europe with large numbers of unemployed, growing numbers of poor people and more citizens with limited access to health care and social services. These and many other negative indicators reveal the present inadequacy of Europe in providing social quality for its citizens.

We want, in contrast, a society for European citizens that is economically successful, but at the same time just and participative. This would be a Europe with social quality. Citizens would be able and required to participate in the social and economic life of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being, their individual potential and the welfare of their communities. In order to be enabled to participate, citizens need to have access to an accepted level of economic security and social inclusion, to live in cohesive communities and to be empowered to develop their utmost skills. In other words social quality depends on the extent of economic, social and political citizenship enjoyed by the people of Europe. In a globalised economy, competitiveness should go hand in hand with the promotion of social cohesion and the realisation of each European citizen's full potential.

Social quality requires the following basic conditions:

- security and protection from violence and ecological threats;
- decent housing, heating, clothing and food for all;
- access to health care and other social services for all in need of them;
- the opportunity to organise one's personal life in conformity with one's own preferences, including the possibility to constitute a common household, to raise one's own children as well as have sufficient time to be together with family and friends;
- sufficient work for all; work being not only employment in the labour market but also other non-paid activities upon which society depends. All workers should have an income that allows them to fully participate in society;
- a decent income for all who cannot work or who by reason of age or ill health are not required to work;
- the opportunity for all young, elderly, disabled, ethnic minorities and immigrant persons to fully integrate into the society and communities they live in;
- access to social protection systems which enable citizens to keep up, in solidarity, the standard of living in case of social contingencies. These social protection systems should focus first on the prevention of social risks, and only then address their restitution and, finally, their financial compensation;
- a lifelong access to education and training opportunities for all;
- an equitable tax system;
- in relation to all the above mentioned aspects, the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, race, religion, political or other beliefs and nationality.

These aspects of social quality must be realised through the recognition of enforceable fundamental rights that are legally binding for all legislators, administrations and judiciaries. These rights find their limits where the corresponding rights of others begin.



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Social quality in Europe requires that European citizens can rely upon a clear and effective distribution of competencies between the Union, the Member States, the Regions and Local Authorities.

- European citizens have a right to know who is politically answerable so that, where required, they can question inappropriate policies;
- Strengthening the democratic quality of political decision making at all levels goes hand in hand with guaranteeing in this process the input of the respective societal organisations and movements concerned;
- A globalised economy requires full awareness in Europe of its global social responsibility for the weakest.

The European Union is urged:

- to make all major European policies subject to a social cohesion impact study;
- to set up a programme that emphasises the cost of not having a Social Europe and creates uniform statistical series on social aspects relating to the whole of the European Union;
- to express clear benchmarks on each social objective that figures in EU legal documents (including recommendations) that have been adopted so far with respect to social aspects and to report regularly on the degree to which these benchmarks have been reached;
- to set a new agenda for the promotion of social quality in Europe, one which engages policy makers, scientists and citizens.

In our capacity as responsible European citizens we therefore solemnly declare that the European Union should urgently give priority to its social quality; otherwise it will not be the Union we support. Social quality may be the result of a variety of approaches, reflecting the diversity of the nations and peoples of our European Union. Supporting, guaranteeing and maintaining social quality shall, however, be a constituent element in the making of Europe. The European Union is therefore urged to demonstrate its determination to complement, at Union level, the European social model of its Member States and to protect and adjust it to meet the challenges of the next millenium. Social quality and the European model which underpins it are essential to the creation of an inclusive Europe, a Europe for all citizens.

Amsterdam, 10 June 1997.



**EUROPEAN SCIENTISTS DECLARATION ON THE SOCIAL QUALITY OF EUROPE. DRAFT PRESS RELEASE: EUROPEAN FOUNDATION ON SOCIAL QUALITY, AMSTERDAM, MAY 28TH, 1997**



Europe is at the crossroads. Voters in the recent UK and French elections decisively rejected the idea of a kind of 'bankers Europe' being offered by the drive towards monetary union. It is clear that the citizens of Europe want a different, more inclusive concept of Europe. Politicians too are beginning to realise that the great lesson of the 1990s is that social cohesion must not be sacrificed to flexible labour-markets.

So far the voices of scientists have been rather muted but, in a bold initiative, 50 of Europe's leading social scientists will present, on 10 June, The Amsterdam Declaration on the Social Quality of Europe. Recognising the new mood that is emerging in Europe and building on the work of the Comité des Sages, the scientists are calling on the Inter-governmental Conference, which culminates in Amsterdam, to create the basic conditions for the continued development of social quality in Europe.

The Declaration calls for a Europe that is economically successful but, at the same time, just and participative. It identifies the negative indicators - such as unemployment, poverty, restricted access to health and social care - which reveal the inadequacy of the existing Social Europe. The alternative Europe of Social Quality must be based on enforceable fundamental rights.

The European Union is urged to:

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1. make all major European policies subject to a social cohesion impact study;
2. set up a programme that emphasises the cost of not having a Social Europe and creates uniform statistical series on social aspects relating to the whole of the European Union;
3. express clear benchmarks on each social objective that figures in EU legal documents (including recommendations) that have been adopted so far with respect of social aspects and to report regularly on the degree to which these benchmarks have been reached;
4. set a new agenda for the promotion of social quality in Europe, one which engages policy makers, scientists and citizens.

The Declaration will be presented, in a solemn ceremony in the 'Beurs van Berlage', 3 pm, June 10th, 1997 to the highest representatives of the City of Amsterdam and the European Parliament, in the presence of the Rectors of the University of Amsterdam, the Free University of Amsterdam and the Catholic University of Brabant. It will then be conveyed to the European Parliament, the IGC and all of the capitals of Europe. Speakers at the following symposium in the Aula of the University of Amsterdam will include.....

Further Information: prof. dr. Alan Walker, prof. dr. Jos Berghman, prof. dr. Kees Knipscheer, dr. Laurent J.G. van der Maesen, European Foundation on Social Quality