



## DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Revised 31-10-96

### 1. Title of the Project:

Implementing Social Rights in Europe (Greek: Για μια Ευρώπη των Κοινωνικών Δικαιωμάτων)

### 2. Organising Institutes:

- Institute for Research and Policy Strategy (INERPOST)
- Marangopoulos Foundation of Human Rights

3. Duration of project: End of October - End of March 1997.

### Preparatory Phase:

During the period between end of October 1996 and the 15th of December 1996, all needed preparations and administrative arrangements will take place. A preparatory meeting will be held with representatives from NGO organisations and from social partners as well as with Europarliamentarians and members of the relevant Social Policy Committee of the Greek Parliament, to discuss the proposed tentative programme. A representative Organising Committee (O.C.) will be formed that will take it upon itself to organise the conference and ensure effective participation. Their advice will be sought as to how best to mobilise their membership and public opinion and to achieve the maximum impact. Following the meeting, invitations will be sent to speakers and participating experts. Finally, during the preparatory phase a mass media campaign will be designed and launched.

### Operational Phase:

The conference will be held on the 16th and 17th of January and will last for one and a half days.

### Follow-up:

During the period from January 1997 to the end of March 1997, the proceedings of the conference will be published. The O.C. with the help of the two Institutes, will organise an open meeting in Thessaloniki, the second largest city in Greece, for the dissemination of the conference results.



#### 4. Justification for the Project:

The unprecedented high rate of unemployment in most European countries, the rise of poverty and social exclusion and the deterioration of living standards for particular segments of European society, are threatening social cohesion in most member-states and are undermining the European Integration Project.

The recent report of the Comité des Sages provides not only a convincing analysis of the problem but also specific proposals for promoting social rights in Europe today and for strengthening the European identity. The principle aim of this conference is three-fold:

- a) to disseminate the findings of this report to the Greek public.
- b) to mobilise Greek NGOs and social partners around the report's conclusions and, in so doing, to strengthen the consultative process that the Comité itself proposes and
- c) to promote an effective dialogue for the implementation of social rights and for strengthening social policy and real convergence as an integral part of building economic and monetary union in Europe.

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#### 5. Description of the Content of the Project

The two-day conference proposed, will be tentatively structured around four sections (programme attached), focusing on both the European and national dimensions of the issues involved.

During the first Section, entitled "The European Dimension", the final report of the Comité des Sages will be presented and discussed. In this same section, we propose to have a second key-note address on "Fighting Unemployment in Europe: The Necessity for an Active Employment Policy".

Section II of the conference will revolve on national characteristics and the scope of social policy in Greece. Although the legal framework of social rights' protection is quite developed, there has been serious debate regarding the margin and the effectiveness of social policy, given the actual economic conditions and the commitment to adhere to the Maastricht convergence criteria. In this section, structured around a key-note address and a panel, the

main parameters of this debate will be re-evaluated, with a view towards forming concrete proposals concerning corrective policy measures.

The third Section will be structured around three consecutive one-hour workshops, where specific implementation problems will be discussed in the European and national contexts. Workshop 1 will deal with "Employment Policy", Workshop 2 on "Immigration and National Policy" and Workshop 3 on "Equality of Opportunities".

Finally, in Section III the results of the presentations and the ensuing dialogue will be further discussed with the intention:

- (a) to bring out the specific problems in implementing social rights and social policy in the specific national context;
- (b) to elaborate the corrective actions needed and
- (c) to map an action programme centering on specific policy initiatives.



Finally, during dinner a key-note speaker will address the issue of the emerging interrelationship between social rights, social policy and democracy.

In Western political tradition, fundamental social rights, concerning employment, housing, food, an adequate standard of living, or free access to public goods, such as education and health, are constituting the essential foundation of civil society. To the extent that globalisation and European integration are perceived as threats to the implementation of these rights and to the provision of equal opportunities, then, the "democratic deficit" of European society is enhanced.

## 6. Timetable and place of the project

The conference will be held between January 16 and 17th at the National Research Institute in Athens. The Conference Hall of the National Research Institute seats 250 people and holds, with added chairs, about 300 people. It is close to major hotels and has a large reception hall which can be used not

only as a coffee place for participants but also as an area where NGOs can mount stands and distribute their own research or programmes.

#### 7. Application of the result

As mentioned earlier, the goal of this meeting is to disseminate the findings of the Comité des Sages Report and to activate the social dialogue. The interaction between social partners, policy makers and NGO representatives will, by itself, have a positive impact on national policy making. Furthermore, the publication of proceedings and subsequent dissemination will enhance public awareness and strengthen the participatory process in the European effort towards building a European civic society.

#### 8. Persons involved

The organising Institutes, INERPOST and MFHF, are well-known, non-profit making organisations, active in the fields of public policy and human rights. Their staff will help mobilise NGOs and participants, which are estimated around 300 people.

We expect at least two members of the Comité to attend the conference and address the introductory panel, including the Chair, Ms Pintasilgo. We also propose to invite Commissioners Mr. Papoutsis and Mr. Flynn as well as Mrs Quintin and Mr. A Larsson from DG V who will be asked to address the conference on "Fighting Unemployment In Europe : The Necessity for an Active Employment Policy".

#### 9. Multiplier effects of the project

The Greek political system is still heavily centralised, especially vis-a-vis the design and implementation of policy. Bringing together social partners, NGOs and policy makers to discuss social rights and social policy will, by itself, be



an important contribution towards strengthening Greek civil society and towards promoting a more active participation of NGOs and social partners in policy making.

Furthermore, this event will launch, at the European level, the participatory process envisaged by the Comité des Sages in their Report and can be used as a pilot conference for the whole series of meetings planned throughout the Community.

Finally, NGOs, social partners and policy makers will be asked to discuss concrete proposals and ways to institutionalise their collaboration in implementing social rights, both at the national and the European levels.



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