

Social Fund

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MADRID EUROPEAN COUNCIL: SOCIAL DIMENSION

1. DURING A CALL ON FELIPE GONZALEZ ON 21 JUNE, THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION UNICE IS REPORTED TO HAVE URGED THAT THE PROPOSED EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER SHOULD BE NON-BINDING IN NATURE. RATGEN TOLD THE PRESS AFTERWARDS THAT THE MADRID SUMMIT SHOULD REJECT THE IDEA OF A SOLEMN DECLARATION AND OPT FOR A MERE RECOMMENDATION: UNICE WERE IN FAVOUR OF GUARANTEEING CERTAIN BASIC RIGHTS FOR WORKERS BUT A RIGID DOCUMENT WOULD DAMAGE COMPETITIVENESS. RATGEN SAID HE SUPPORTED HARMONISED LEGISLATION TO INCREASE LABOUR MOBILITY AND TO PROMOTE TRAINING, HEALTH AND SAFETY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE MORE EFFICIENT USE OF THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS, BUT WAS AGAINST THE COMMUNITY TRYING TO REGULATE IN AREAS BETTER LEFT TO FIRMS OR REGIONAL AUTHORITIES.

2. GONZALEZ IS HOLDING A PARALLEL MEETING WITH THE ETUC TODAY. WE HOPE TO SEE DAVID LEA, TUC ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL AND AN ETUC DELEGATION MEMBER, THIS EVENING.

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