

THE SOCIAL POLICIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Ion Daniel POPA*

Abstract: The establishment of a single European market and the definition of European social policies which to facilitate the gradual closing up of the social policy of the member states and which to promote within the entire community a fast growth of the standard of living and tighter relations between the member states, is a priority and a challenge at the same time. In a broad meaning the social policy includes the activities of the state whose purpose is to change the characteristics of the social life of a community. The social policy of the European Union consists of the European labour legislation, of the legislation against discrimination, of dispositions regarding the health state and education, particularly from the dispositions and actions funded from the Structural funds. The fact that the last social agenda of the EU is structured on two priorities which regard decent jobs and social justice proves more and more the distinction between the active employment policies and the other types of social policies. The provisions of the European social agenda are to be transposed within the European employment strategy and then in the programs of each member state, function of the specific features of each country.

Keywords: social policies, member state, employment, social agenda, community

1. Arguments of the social politics of the European Union

“The most first challenge for the tomorrow Union will be the finding of a solution to the problems concerning the compatibility necessity of the social security systems and of industrial relations of our states, taking also into account the obligations that the international competitiveness imposes to Europe as a system.”¹

(Romano Prodi)

* Expert on social policies and absorption of structural funds, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, email: iondanielpopa@yahoo.com.

¹ Prodi, Romano (2001), *A vision over Europe*, Iasi, Polirom expenditure, p. 51.

Into the context of the economical politics at European and global level, a great challenge for the European Union is the definition of some social European politics. Taking into account the general evolution of the European Union as well as of the social politics from inside of it that I will subsequently talk about, there could be issued two hypotheses concerning the formation of this kind of policies:

- A) The social European politics represent a necessary consequence of the creation of the unique European market, but not the result of solidarity of the citizens from the member states.
- B) The dialectics between the solidarity and equity characteristic to the national status was detailed also at the level of the European Union. So the poor countries and regions or the rich ones take the place of the classes from inside the state.

For supporting the first hypothesis there can be brought more arguments that are also recognized by the sustainers of some common European social politics. From another perspective these arguments become causes of the common policy.

1. **The assurance of the free workers' movement** (the official term "worker" refers to all the types of workers no matter the field and the qualification level) obviously results from the fundamental principle of the free movement of the persons inside the European Union. For this principle to be plainly functional there was necessary to ensure "the transferability of rights of the workers beyond the national borders" so as the persons that get a job in another country not to lose their social security that they had in their origin country. This mobility in the field of work market – labour mobility – is maybe the only important social measure that the Treaty from Rome was mentioning in art. 48-51, in the sense that, the workers that move from a country to the other will benefit of the existent social rights in the host country. In the 60's under the effect of the Rome Treaty, there wasn't yet existent the problem of the supranational social politics but only of the "coordination of the national security systems with the purpose of reducing the incompatibilities.
2. **The social dumping and tourism**, as major risks of the inequalities concerning the life standards from the member states, appeared in the 60s and intensified in the 70's and 80's just as a reaction to the workers' moving on the European Union's territory. These situations were signed by the countries that were strongly evolved from the north – west of the continent, that were forced to confront with a wave of workers from the southern parts of Europe. In the context of the borders disappearance, the countries with low levels of social protection could effectively to export the surplus of work force towards the countries that were strongly evolved by this form of social tourism. The adhesion of Greece, Spain and Portugal in the 80's in the European Economical Community raised

the fear of the rich countries from the north - west of Europe and made that by their representatives from the European Commission to make pressures for adopting a reasonable social policy at a communitarian level.

3. The economical efficiency. Although it may appear paradoxical, the economical efficiency constituted a strong argument in the evolution of the social policy of the European Union. By the specific services that it assures, the social policy may represent by the political legitimacy for the industrial – capitalist regime a healthier and better educated workforce which means a raise of the economical efficiency. This argument that is obviously of a neomarxist provenience sensitizes the decision factors of the Occidental Europe and led in time to the adoption of a bigger budget and to some simulative measures that raised considerably the performances in education and medicine.
4. The social cohesion – the most recent and comprehensive concept from the base of the social policies according to the Treaty from Amsterdam (1997) – supports actually a larger policy of the European Union: the cohesion policy. As it may be noticed all these arguments or causes of the social policy are linked by the work rights and the work force occupancy.

For supporting the second hypothesis, there are brought arguments by the existence and management of the Structural Funds that have as target the disadvantaged regions and implicitly their inhabitants. This type of socioeconomic help underlines the idea of a solidarity Europe but also keeps a high level of solidarity at the level of the national states, by the lack of some strong institutions at a central level to coordinate the policies and the resources of the Community.

The 'fight' from inside the Council for the Structural Funds allotment and the local management of the regional evolution come to support the idea that the place of the citizen or of the organizations is taken at the EU level by the concerned states or regions.

2. The social policies – conceptual delimitations

In a broad sense, the social policy holds activities of the state that have as objective the modification in a specified sense, of the characteristics of the social life of a collectivity¹. From a more detailed perspective, the social policy is formed of the placed activities by the help of the state (strategies, programs, projects, institutions, actions, legislation) that influences the individual's welfare, family's or community's in

¹ Zamfir, Elena, Zamfir, Cătălin (1994), *Social policies. Romania in an European context*, Bucharest, Alternative expenditure, p. 22.

a society¹. The activities of the NGOs, syndicates, patronages, professional associations or of other organizations enter in the sphere of the social politics only if they enter in the field of the social policies system organized by the state.

There must be operated the distinction between the social European policies and the social policy of the European Union. The European social policies represent a general field including both the supported social policies by the European Union and the policies of the member states

The social policy of the European Union is formed of the work European legislation in the fight against discrimination, in disposal about health and education and especially from the financed regulations and actions of the Structural Funds.

By this kind of policy the Union doesn't grant any material or financial help or free services, but, by these funds it supports countries or regions less evolved just to have positive effects to the different social groups (workers menaced with unemployment, unemployed, women, disabled persons).

This way, the main dimensions of the European Union's social policies stay the policy of the work force engagement and the right for work (legislative measures).

The communitarian spending in the field of the social policy is still low comparing with the national ones for the safety of the welfare status. The national governments provides the allowances, unemployment benefits and other social supports (social assurances), as well as the protection system and the social assistance.

The legislation at the European level takes into account firstly the member states workers parity no matter their sexual orientation, ethnical, religious membership or their citizenship. There is also taken into account the security and the social protection at the work place of the workers. Although there they talk about a higher life level of the European citizens, there aren't yet clear regulations from this point of view. Because the coordinating of the social protection system stays at a national level it may be said that the territorial sovereignty is still alive in the field of the social policies.

3. The legal support and programmatic documents of the European Union's social policy

The social policy of the European Community appeared at the same time with the Treaty of its own constitution in 1957.

¹ Preda, Marian (2001), *The social Romanian policy – between poverty and globalisation*, Polirom expenditure, Iasi, p. 8.

The community has as a mission, by establishing a common market and by a step by step proximity of the economical policies of the member states, to promote all around the Community a harmonious evolving of the economical activities, a long lasting and equilibrated growth, an accelerated raise of the life level and closer relations between the states that reunites¹.

The treaty of Rome establishes the social policies by:

- Regulations about the free movement of the workers and their free stops:
 - (1) *The free movement of the workers is guaranteed inside the community no later than at the end of the transition period.*
 - (2) *The free movement includes implicitly the elimination of any discrimination because of citizenship principles between the workers of the member states, as it also concerns the employment, payment and all the other work conditions².*
- To improve the work and life conditions, general principles of harmonization of the coordinating system in the idea of creating a common market:

The member states agree over the necessity of promoting the life and work conditions of the work force just to grant them the equalization for progress. The member states consider that such an evolution will result from the common market functioning that will be a support for the social systems harmonization as well as from the regulations established by the present treaty and from keeping close the papers that have the law power, the administrative papers. (...) The Committee has the mission to promote a tight cooperation between the member states in the social field, especially in problems concerning: employment, the rights of work and the work conditions, the orientation and professional training, social security, the protection against professional illness and accidents, the occupational, the right of collective association and negotiation between the employees and employers³.

- The creation of the European Social Fund, as instrument for financing the social policy⁴.

The communitarian institutions had an important role in facilitating the free movement of the work force by priority economical reasons. Work is an important production factor and it's under using was a way of blackmailing the economical raise process which was generating welfare for the integration system.

To complete the regulations from the Rome Treaty, there were adopted a series of directives in the social field: directives that referred to the equal access for guidance

¹ The treaty of Rome, Principles, art. 2.

² i.e., title III, chapter 1, art. 48.

³ i.e., title III, chapter 1, art. 117 - 118

⁴ i.e., art. 123.

and engagement, the right to benefit of the social protection. In this first period, the social policy concentrated on the next two axes:

- Stipulations about the technical problems – measures of sustenance for the free movement of the work force, the inter industrial relations and the technical aspects of the social security.
- The liberal vision according to which the guidance in the social system in CE will automatically result from the positive answer of the mechanisms of the market for the integrationist approach. In this category were the identification and fighting against the actions of stopping the free movement of the workers.

Step by step, the social dimension begins to have a more important role in the European agenda. In 1974 is adopted the first Program for social action which actually didn't have the expected results because of the structural and district crisis from that period even if the number of the member states was bigger and also their social problems. The action program was targeting some new types of measures: *the workers' protection in a Europe that was passing through a recession, especially of those fired because of the bankruptcy, the actually equal treatment for women and men, the strengthening and enriching of the social dialogue between the workers and patronage*¹. The economical pressures that the member state were subject to in this period determined the coming back to finding solutions at national level.

The Spain's and Portugal's subscription in 1986 reiterated the emergency of creating a communitarian answer to the social problem. So, the adoption of the Unique European Act (AUE) brings new perspectives for the health and the work protection, the introduction of the social dialogue and of the concept of economical and social cohesion. The main objective stays the encouragement of the free moving of the persons for creating the unique market. AUE extends the use of the qualified majority both to the work's legislation and the health one.

In the year 1989, there is established the first programmatic document of the social policy. The community's charter concerning the fundamental social rights of the workers (the social chart), that filled a legislative communitarian gap. This important document was adopted as answer to the danger of evolving an integrated economy in which some social groups risked to be disadvantaged. The member states granted the following objectives: to make better conditions for work and life, the right of free establishment of the resident workers from the EU, in one of the member states, the right to a correct righteous remuneration, the right to social

¹ Miron, Dumitru (2002), *The European Union's Economy*, Luceafarul expenditure, Bucharest, p. 393.

protection even for the employees, the right for study and guidance, even chances for men and women, the children's' and adolescents' protection¹.

The declared purpose of the Social Chart was to offer a better harmonization of the national social practices and policies and to strengthen the mobility of the work force inside the European Union. This was following to attack the following action fields:

- The protection of the workers that move inside the Community's territory;
- The righteous payment of the workers;
- To enrich and gather the conditions of work of the employees;
- The social security;
- The liberty of association and of collective negotiations;
- Alternative qualification;
- Even chances for men and women;
- Engagements of informing, consulting and participation;
- Health and safety at work;
- The employment of the young persons;
- The pensioners;
- The disabled persons.

None of these fields of action is new and the Chart doesn't hold a list of the recommendable legislations. Because of its wish to be accepted by all the member states the Convention was written in evasive terms loosing from its force of creating a break in the social field. There were rumors from some of the countries, especially from Great Britain who sustained that the social legislation stops the market principles from functioning while the Belgian authorities underlined the fact that there weren't done too many things by this Chart. All the states took care that their own industries to stay competitive and not to be affected by the regulations of this document.

In spite of these opposing discussions the member states adopted in 1990 the second program for social action to lead to the Chart's application. The program's initiatives had as support the following principles:

- Subsidiary;

¹ i.e., p. 396.

- The principle of keeping the diversity inside the systems, cultures and national practices;
- The principle of maintaining the competitiveness without the essence of the actions to menace the social and economical dimensions¹.

The result on the short term of this program was the initialization of over 40 proposals from which only 21 were applicable. The regulations that resulted gave birth to other controversies, especially the ones that referred to the work time, the protection of the pregnant women at the workplace and the social protection of the young persons. Because of this there were left many unsolved problems that were repeated in the Third Action Program in 1995.

The Maastricht treaty reviews the social regulations since that moment and introduces the concept of economical and social cohesion:

“The community has as mission by establishing a common market, the creation of a monetary and economical union and, by applying the policies or the common actions that are mentioned at the articles 3 and 3a to promote (...) a high level of engagement of the workforce and of social protection, a better life level and of the life’s quality, social and economical cohesion” (art. 2).

There is accentuated the necessity of creating the social cohesion, as determining element for promoting the progress at the level of the entire Union. There is established as wish the assurance of a high level of engagement of the workforce, but not yet said in absolute numbers.

The articles 39 – 42 (Workers undercharged) refer to the workers’ right to work in any member state benefiting of an equal treatment as concerning the wages, of the work conditions or of the employment and the exclusion of any obstacles for their free moving inside the EU. The articles 125 – 130 (title VIII, The workforce’s engagement) support the evolving of the strategy for the work market, with qualified work force, trained and adapted to the economical changes. The articles 136 – 145 (chapter I, Social preventions) has as a start point The European Social Chart and suggest: *“the promotion of the workplaces, better life and work conditions so as to possible an harmonization of the work at a high level, corresponding social protection, dialogue between the employees and the employer, the evolution of the human resources and the omission of the social exclusion.”*

When applying these principles there is to be taken into account by the characteristics and the legislation of each state but with a priority of maintaining the Community’s competitiveness. It is admitted the fact that the social and economical

¹ Jones, Robert A. (2001), *The Politics and Economics of the European Union*, Second Edition, Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., Cheltenham, p. 416 – 417.

progress won't be obtained only because of the existence of the unique market that will help the harmonization of the social systems, but practicing the social regulations of the Treaty and of the other legislative preventions.

If till this moment the discussions were only about the workers' rights, The Maastricht Treaty establishes in the Article no. 8 a citizenship of the Union such as, each citizen (any person that has the nationality of a member state) may use the rights and assumes the regulations inside.

In 1991 there was added to the Maastricht Treaty a Protocol and an agreement concerning the social policy that offers progresses on the line of the social policy objectives' accomplishment¹. The protocol extends the possibility of adopting with a qualified majority of the conditions of work, to inform and guide the busy persons, to integrate the unemployed on the labor market and holds unanimity for the measures about the social security. The type of the problems discussed in the Social Protocol (art. 2, point 1) is about:

- Actions that are meant to enhance the work climate, including measures concerning health and work security;
- Activities that are about the work conditions, including the work time and the leaves;
- To inform and talk with the workers;
- Actions of promoting the even chances and of integration of the excluded persons from the work market.

Art. 2 points (2) and (3) talk about the support that the Community offers to the member states in the actions mentioned above by the Council's adopting of some regulations with minimal prescriptions that are available in a progressive way after a reference limit with the Economic and Social Committee.

By the Consultative green book about the options for the social policy (Green Paper) since 1983 there was open the discussions' process about the future of the social policies at a communitarian level. The document was followed by the **White Book** concerning the economical growth (White Paper) that established the priorities of the social policy to the year 2000. The purpose of these documents was the recovering of the European economy by measures for the labor force. The main problem was considered the creation of premises for the work market to be able to adapt itself to the changes from the production systems and to the organizational management².

¹ i.e., p. 419.

² Cram, Laura (1999), *Developments in the European Union* Macmillan Press, London, p. 174.

The action plan didn't hold any details about the legislative changes at a communitarian level but presented a general action vision that the member states had to apply. There was given a special attention to the assurance of the works flexibility tightly linked with the maintenance of an integrated package of social rights. The action program was structured on the following directions¹:

1. *Economy:*

- Healthy integrated economy – stable economical and monetary policies, nationally coherent, controlled public spending and a moderated inflation with the purpose of creating an economical climate good for investments and economical evolution;
- Open economy – the interdiction of the disloyal concurrencies practices;
- Decentralized economy – to allow the evolution of the IMMs.

2. *The work force's engagement:*

- To evolve the educational process and of professional guidance;
- The introduction of a greater degree of flexibility in the field of engagement by disorders of the labor market;
- To use efficiently the public funds for active informing policies concerning the employment conditions;
- Measures of encouraging the unqualified young people for attending the guidance courses;
- Fiscal measures concerning the environment that represent a way of compensation for the social costs.

The priorities from the White Book concerning the economical evolution were the base of the measures included in the third Program of social action adopted in 1995. The measures talk about:

- the use in the most efficient way of the European Social Fund for supporting the programs for more work place;
- the growth of work's efficacy;
- even chances for the work behaviour;
- to promote an active civil society and the growth of the democratized process for decisions' adoption so as, all the social partners to be implied².

The Treaty from Amsterdam since 1997 repeals The Social Protocol from 1991 and changes the responsibility for the emittance of the social policies to the level of each

¹ Miron, Dumitru (2002), *The Economy of the European Union*, Luceafarul expenditure, Bucharest, p. 397.

² i.e. p. 399.

member state, as well as the possibility of applying some pilot programs for a growth of the labor force's engagement financed from the resources of the European Social Fund.

The community and the member states that are aware of the fundamental social rights as well as of the ones mentioned in the European Social Chart signed at Torino on 18 October 1961 and from the Communitarian Chart of the fundamental social rights of the workers adopted in 1989 have as objectives the labor force's engagement, the growth of the living and work conditions, permitting their harmonization in progress conditions, an adequate social protection, social dialogue, the evolution of the human resources to allow a high and long lasting level of the labor force's engagement and the exclusion of marginalization (art. 136).

The treaty holds a chapter that concerns the elaboration of a coordinated strategy for the labor force's engagement (title VIII). Even though, the ways used for applying this strategy are modest. There is for the first time when there appear in European Treaty regulations for the work force's using.

An important step is made by admitting the fundamental rights of the citizens. The citizenship implies rights that are not conditioned any more by the employee quality, offering the possibility to change the residency of the citizens in a country with a system of social protection more useful. Anyway, for getting the residency right there must have been done the proof of holding the means of living, this way limiting this right of free movement of the citizens.

Year 2000 represents a major moment in the social policy's evolution by emitting the Lisbon Strategy (Lisbon Strategy) where there is established the ten year objective of the Union, represented by the transformation of the EU economy in the most competitive one, being based on knowledge by *the economical European competitiveness's growth and on its capacity to sustain the economical growth, the engagement growth and a bigger social cohesion*¹, establishing as final object in the social plan the growth of engagement to over 70% till 2010.

The Lisbon Strategy represented the basis for the debate of the European Social Agenda 2000-2004 and of the future social architecture. The Agenda of the Social Policy was debated to Lisbon and adopted to Niche in 2000 and represented the programmatic document and degree of implementation of the communitarian social policy between 2000 and 2004. This takes the objectives and the elements of the strategy that are linked with the social policy and changes the in an action plan for five years. The base principle is *the enforcement of the social policy as a productive*

¹ *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs, Creating more employment in Europe* (2003), European Commission, Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs, p. 5.

*factor*¹. Moreover, the Agenda reflects the change and the cross of this policy from an approach that concentrated on the negative social consequences minimization (appeared at the same time with the structural change) to one concentrated on quality and having as purpose “*the modernization of the social system and the people investment*”, that integrates the social policy with the economical policy and the policy of labor force engagement.

The priorities of the social policy for the period 2000 – 2004 were the following:

- the high level of labor force engagement – to create and promote new places of work;
- *the work quality* – better places of work, equilibrated ways of combining the professional life with the private one which includes the existence of a better employment policy, reasonable wages and an organization of the work adapted to the needs of the employers and employees at the same time;
- *the quality of the so – said social policy* – a high degree of social protection, the existence of some quality social services all over the Union and that are accessible for everybody, to create real opportunities for all the persons and to guarantee for the fundamental and social rights – aspects that play an essential part in accomplishing the ten years objective of the social policy, by matching the productivity with the personal – professional satisfaction;
- *the quality of the industrial relations* – to adapt to the industrial changes that represent the impact of “knowledge”, of the new technologies and of the research in the economical progress².

To solve these priorities represented a major challenge and imposed their classification on specific objectives and to adopt real and adequate measure actions.

The first two priorities – *the high level of labor force engagement* and *the quality of work* – are linked with the dynamics of the labor market and of the professional area. They were elaborated together and got common action coordination, such as:

- to create a higher and better number of places of work with the purpose of raising the general level of engagement to 70% and the women’s engagement level to 60%;
- the anticipation and the change management, to adapt to the new work environment represented by the society oriented towards knowledge and

¹ Communication from the Commission, *Social Policy Agenda 2000*.

² *Politique sociale et de l’emploi européenne: une politique par les citoyens*, Direction générale de l’éducation et de la culture, Office des publications officielles des Communautés Européenne, Luxembourg, 2000, p. 9.

technological evolution by a corresponding and efficient information both of the employers and the employees with the purpose of weighing the flexibility and the safety of the workplace;

- to exploit the offered opportunities by the society based on knowledge, by promoting the common learning, of new form of work organization and bigger chances of employment for the disabled persons;
- to promote the labor force's mobility by implementing the free movement of the workforce, to eliminate the geographical obstacles, to create mechanisms that facilitate mobility.

The priority that refers to *a better quality of the work force* is represented by measures that concern different fields of the social life and it is tightly correlated with the way in which it interfere with the professional life:

- the modernization and enrichment of the social protection for a sure income, to secure the pensions and to create some long lasting pension systems, to evolve a performante teaching system;
- to promote the social inclusion – to prevent and eradicate poorness, everybody's participation in the economical and social life;
- to promote the gender parity and to promote women's participation to the economic, scientific, social, politic and civic life;
- to strengthen the fundamental rights and to exclude discrimination.

The Social Agenda 2000 – 2004 was evaluated annually and the conclusions of The Report of the Group at the High Level presided by the ex Dutch Prime-minister Wim Kok, published in may 2004, were at the basis of its reform in the next year. The Report had as objective an independent evaluation of the social policies at the end of the 2000 – 2004 and suggested the following recommendations in this field for the next period:

- a) a bigger power of adaptability of the workers and plants;
- b) to attract as many as possible persons to enter and remain on the labor market;
- c) to invest as efficiently as possible in the human capital;
- d) to assure the real implementation of the reforms by a good coordination¹.

The change of the structure of the European Commission beginning with 2005 brought a new action program at the level of the European Union policies. The

¹ *Report of the High Level Group of the future of social policy in an enlarged European Union* (2004), European Commission, Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs, p. 52.

coordinating document of the Commission named “*The economical growth and new places of work*” (Growth and Jobs) considers the reviewing of the Lisbon Strategy, by a coherent response to the new challenges of the globalization as well as to the complete unaccomplishment of some previous objectives¹. The Commission’s program grants a very big importance to the work engagement policies as a key factor of the economical² evolution. Inside this program was launched the Social Agenda 2005 – 2010 ³that goes on with the precedent efforts but also brings new solutions.

For catching the proposed targets there are imposed and observing and application of the following essential principles:

1. **The intergenerational approach** (*intergenerational approach*) targeting the policy’s changes for supporting the young persons. With this purpose there was elaborated the “Green Chart of the demographical changes”⁴, with the purpose of analyzing the demographical tendencies o and of the establishment of a strategy. Moreover, by creating the European Initiative for the Young People (*European Initiative for Youth*) there is intended the inclusion of the youth’s dimension in the social and engagement strategies.
2. **The partnership for change**, by a greater involvement of the national governments, of the social partners, of the civil society and by organizing an annual meeting of all the persons implied with the purpose of reevaluating the Agenda.
3. **The external dimension** – to take into account the offered opportunities by globalization by experience changes and good practices in the field of the social and economical progress as well as with the national governments of other states from the world as well as with the international organizations.

The Social Agenda is structured on two priority fields:

- a. “**The full engagement**” by transforming works in a real option for everybody, to increase the quality of the work productivity and to anticipate the positive management of change.

¹ Communication au Conseil Européen de printemps, *Trevaillons ensemble pour la croissance et l’emploi. Un nouvel élan pour la stratégie de Lisbonne*, Bruxelles, 2.02.2005 COM (2005) 24 final.

² *Questions and Answers on the Social Agenda*, (MEMO/05/41).

³ *The Social Agenda 2005-2010*, European Commission, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 2005.

⁴ *Green paper, Confronting demographic change: A new solidarity between the generations*, 16.03.2005.

The measures suggested for this objective considers the renewal of the European strategy for the occupation and the reform of the European Social Fund to assure the convergence, the engagement and competitiveness in the regions less evolved. It is also taken into account the immediate following period for the growth of the social policy's legal field, by suggesting for discussion inside the social dialogue of some legislative regulations concerning the accidents' risks at the work place and the protection of the workers' personal data. Inside this chapter there were appreciated the precedent successes of the social dialogue and there underlined the importance of the corporative social responsibility as a positive factor of the progress of the social policies.

b. "A cohesive society – equal opportunities for everybody".

The second priority field of the Agenda has the following components:

- To modernize the social protection in the member states of the European Union by using the open coordination method. Taking into account the previous successes of this, inside of which beginning with 2000 there is discussed the exclusion and poverty problem and in 2002 the problem of pensions was suggested as, beginning with 2006 to be discussed also the problem of the health services but by simplifying this procedure and by integrating the whole three fields;
- The beginning of a debate concerning the minimum level of the social support for the persons menaced with the social exclusion;
- The completion of the legal and institutional field in the fight against discrimination and the creation of an European Institute of Gender.
- The establishing of the role and characteristics of the social services for the general interest.

Comparing with the previous social agendas, the last document is better structured and more coherent as a pillar of the Commission's program for the present period. The fact that it is structured on two priorities proves more and more the distinction made between the engagements active policies at the European level and the other kinds of social policy. The two priorities were summarized as *decent jobs* and *social justice*.

In the introduction of the Bulletin about the social agenda there is talked about the taking into consideration of the costs of the absence of the social policy (*the cost of lack of the social policy*) that can be interpreted both from the social point of view but also from the economical one. So there is estimated that the costs' level of the inappropriate conditions of work is of 3% from the communitarian PNB¹.

¹ *Questions and Answers on the New Social Agenda*, p. 3.

The recommendations from the Social Agenda were transposed in the directorial lines 2005 – 2008 of the Program “Growth and jobs” which were structured on three fields: macro economical policies, micro – economical policies and policies for work engagement¹. These guidelines are to be applied in each member state depending on characteristics, following to be presented in the European Strategy of the engagement of the work force and then in the programs of each state.

Selective literature

Jones, Robert A. (2001), *The Politics and Economics of the European Union* Second edition, Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Miron, Dumitru (2002), *The European Unions’ Economy*, Luceafarul Expenditure, Bucharest.

Preda, Marian (2001), *The Social Romanian Policy – Between poverty and globalisation*, Polirom Expenditure, Iasi

Prodi, Romano (2001), *A Vision over Europe*, Plirom Expenditure, Iasi.

Zamfir, Elena, Zamfir, Catalin (1994), *Social policies. Romania in European Context*, Alternative Expenditure, Bucharest.

¹ *Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005 – 2008)*, Communication from the President, in agreement with the Vice – President Verheugen and Commissioners Almunia and Spidla, Brussels, 12.04.2005 COM (2005) 141 final.