



## **‘Europe – succeeding together’**

### **German EU presidency January-July 2007**

On 17 January, German Chancellor Angela Merkel held a speech in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. In this speech, she called the European Union a ‘wonderful house’ that she never wanted to leave. Continuing on this metaphor, she described the enlargement and reform processes as the extension and renovation of this house. Angela Merkel will be at the helm of this European home for six months as Germany took over the EU presidency from Finland in the beginning of this year. Germany will be presiding over a Union that has recently expanded to 27 members and that faces major challenges with regard to institutional reform. In her speech, Merkel underlined the importance of defining the essence of Europe. Apart from the obvious striving for economic (and social!) prosperity, she mentioned the ‘soul of Europe’, referring to Jacques Delors’ historic words.

The work programme of the German presidency is quite ambitious, particularly when it comes to ‘revitalising’ the debate concerning a constitution for Europe. As for Social affairs and Employment, Germany uses the motto ‘joining forces for a social Europe and a social world’ referring to both the EU and the G8 presidency that the country is currently holding as well. Refining the European Social Model, strengthening public trust and emphasising the interdependence between employment, economic and social policy are the main objectives when talking about a ‘social Europe’. Naturally, this should all be seen within the objectives of the Lisbon strategy, which aims at creating more and better jobs.

Eurofedop will closely follow the activities of the German presidency and will be present as a social partner in the European Social Dialogue. As the Germans ‘share’ their presidential task with Portugal and Slovenia, Eurofedop is already actively working on its contacts with the Germans as well as the Portuguese and Slovenians.

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#### **Links:**

German Presidency:  
<http://www.eu2007.de>

Work programme:  
[http://www.eu2007.de/includes/Downloads/Praesidentschaftsprogramm/EU\\_Presidency\\_Programme\\_final.pdf](http://www.eu2007.de/includes/Downloads/Praesidentschaftsprogramm/EU_Presidency_Programme_final.pdf)