

## CALL FOR A WORK-FREE SUNDAY

*On the occasion of the **First European Conference on the Protection of a Work-Free Sunday** to take place at the European Parliament, Brussels on 24 March 2010*

We the undersigned believe that, as a matter of *principle*, all citizens of the European Union are entitled to benefit from a work-free Sunday. Of course, this does not exclude exceptions necessary for the provision of essential services, nor does it prejudice the important role of social partners in the negotiation of collective agreements.

The protection of a work-free Sunday is of paramount importance for workers' health<sup>1</sup>, for the reconciliation of work and family life<sup>2</sup> as well as for the life of civil society as a whole. This common weekly day of rest serves to strengthen social cohesion in our societies<sup>3</sup>, a cohesion so severely undermined by the current economic crisis.

We therefore call upon the **Heads of State and Government** of the 27 EU Member States, gathering tomorrow for their Spring Summit, to firmly resist the growing economic pressure to liberalise the laws providing for a work-free Sunday and to commit themselves to safeguard and promote a work-free Sunday as a pillar of the European Social Model within the laws of their respective nations.

We call upon the **European Commission** to effectively strengthen the European Social Model so keenly sought by millions of citizens across Europe. We especially urge the European Commission to ensure that EU legislation and internal market rules guarantee the central place of a work-free Sunday in the life of workers and of society as a whole and to guarantee that no new pressure is placed on the principle of a work-free Sunday.

We call upon the **Members of the European Parliament** to ensure that all relevant EU legislation both respects and promotes the protection of Sunday as a weekly day of rest for all EU citizens.

Finally, we call upon all **European citizens** to sign a future Citizens' Initiative to be expressed in favour of the protection of a work-free Sunday.

We trust that the *First European Conference on the Protection of a Work-Free Sunday* will prove to be the starting point for a permanent cooperation network between the organisers and supporting partners of the conference. We anticipate that such cooperation will pave the way for

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<sup>1</sup> Scientific studies demonstrate that a work-free Sunday is more important for workers' health and well-being than any other work-free day during the week. Sunday work places enormous pressure on workers and their families. It encourages burnout and leads to sickness and absenteeism.

<sup>2</sup> On Sundays, parents and children are able to spend time with each other. Schools are closed on this day. According to the EU Directive on the Protection of Young People at Work, Sunday is already the acknowledged weekly rest day for children and adolescents of the EU.

<sup>3</sup> Because it enables citizens to participate in social and associative life, to seek cultural and spiritual recreation and to engage in volunteer activities, a work-free Sunday strengthens the social cohesion of our societies.

the creation of the **first European Free Sunday Alliance**.

Brussels, 24 March 2010

Thomas Mann, MEP (PPE)

Patrizia Toia, MEP (S&D)

	<p>UNI europa commerce</p>
	<p>Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Confederation of German Trade Unions)</p>
	<p>Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (Confederation of Austrian Trade Unions)</p>
	<p>Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (French Confederation of Christian Workers)</p>
	<p>Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community</p>
	<p>Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches</p>
	<p>Allianz für den Freien Sonntag Deutschland (German Free Sunday Alliance)</p>
	<p>Allianz für den Freien Sonntag Österreich (Austrian Free Sunday Alliance)</p>
	<p>Collectif des Amis du Dimanche (French Free Sunday Alliance)</p>

	<p>Keep Sunday Special (UK)</p>
	<p>Slovak Free Sunday Alliance</p>
	<p>European Union of Christian Democratic Workers</p>
	<p>Kolping Europa</p>
	<p>Renovabis (<i>Catholic Relief Organisation for Eastern Europe</i>)</p>
	<p>Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken (<i>Central Committee of German Catholics</i>)</p>
	<p>Katholischer Laienrat Österreichs (<i>Catholic Lay Council Austria</i>)</p>
	<p>Katholische Arbeitnehmerbewegung Deutschland (<i>Catholic Workers' Movement Germany</i>)</p>
	<p>Kirchlicher Dienst in der Arbeitswelt der EKD (<i>Protestant Church Service in Working Environment</i>)</p>
	<p>Associazioni Cristiane Lavoratori Italiani (<i>Italian Christian Workers' Association</i>)</p>
	<p>Křesťan a práce, o.s. (<i>Christ and Work</i>), Czech Republic</p>

	<p>Katholischer Verband der Werktätigen Südtirol (<i>Catholic Workers' Association Soutern Tyrol</i>), Italy</p>
	<p>Bundesverband der Evangelischen Arbeitnehmerorganisationen (<i>Confederation of Protestant Workers' Associations</i>), Germany</p>
	<p>Katholische Betriebsseelsorge (<i>Catholic Business Guidance</i>), Germany</p>
	<p>Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe</p>
	<p>Evangelische Aktionsgemeinschaft für Familienfragen (<i>Protestant Family Association</i>), Germany</p>
	<p>Familienbund der Katholiken (<i>Catholic Family Association</i>), Germany</p>
	<p>Jubilee Centre</p>
	<p>Care for Europe</p>
	<p>Jesuit European Office</p>