



EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF EMPLOYEE SHAREOWNERSHIP

May 31, 2004

EFES CALL TO THE NEW EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COMMISSION AND TO ALL GOVERNMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP FOR THE LISBON STRATEGY

In 1998, when the European Federation of Employee Share Ownership was set up, some 10% of American employees held shares of their enterprise; they are now 23,3%. Some weeks ago, the Australian Government launched a programme to double employee share ownership in Australia, from 5,5% of employees today to 11% in 2009.

Today, performances studies have multiplied and we can now consider with no doubt that when it is practiced in good conditions, employee ownership brings to enterprises a gain of performances estimated at 2% of additional annual growth on average. On the European Union scale, this would represent millions of additional jobs. In this way the development of employee ownership and financial participation could be an important factor for the Lisbon Strategy.

Today, we are far from a European awareness and a strong mobilisation. Scepticism or indifference still dominate in many European countries. The contrast is obvious in comparison with the United States, Australia and other parts of the world. A political willingness of the European Union has still to crystallize. We recommend that Europe gives itself a voluntary objective of industrial policy : reach 10 % of employee ownership in the whole European Union in 2010.

In this way, a whole combination of means have to be implemented at the Union level, in the Member States and in the regions. We particularly insist on the followings :

1. The implementation of a community organ (agency? institute? committee?) for the promotion and the development of employee ownership. In this way, we applaud the proposal of the European Commission Experts Group, chaired by Jean-Baptiste de Foucault, to install a European Committee for Financial Participation of Workers.
2. An adapted legislation must be applied in each country of the European Union. Too much countries simply do not have an adapted legislation. In this way too, we applaud the proposals of the Experts Group of the Commission chaired by Jean-Baptiste de Foucault.
3. Enterprise transfer and salvation of failing enterprises are situations where employee ownership has already proved its worth (see the good example of the Spanish *sociedades laborales*). Employee buyouts schemes should get particular support. These formulas are not only to be supported for themselves but also because they are favourable to the diffusion and promotion of employee ownership, in all enterprises of the Union's countries.