

Xth National Congress of Delegates of NSZZ "Solidarność"
Jastzębie Zdrój, 24-24.IX.1998

Programme Resolution

Independent and Self Governing Trade Union (NSZZ) "Solidarnosc" was created in 1980 in order to defend the interests of the workers and their families in the peaceful way, and following the social teaching of the Roman-Catholic Church it is building the social relationships based on the truth, respect for human dignity, freedom and patriotism.

Our vision of the state was included in the Citizens' Project of the Constitution and in the programme of Electoral Action of "Solidarnosc" (AWS). The winning score of AWS in the elections created a chance of full realisation of this programme.

Beginning four-year term puts NSZZ "Solidarnosc" in front of new, difficult challenges.

The fate of the Polish workers is more and more depending on the development of the international situation and the globalisation of the world economy. Poland, being a member of OECD and negotiating the access to the European Union, is getting involved in its structures and comes under its rules.

The situation in the country is substantially changing due to the reform of the state system: the change of the administration structure and decentralisation of the state, the reform of education, social insurance, health care and the introduction of health insurance. The transformation of the economy is being continued, and it is characterised by the diminishing role of the traditional sectors due to the restructuring of economy, especially the heavy industry, by growing trade and increasing share of the private property.

The fast economic growth, technical and organisational development are not the only effects of these transformations. There is also growing unemployment, increasing differences between social groups, deregulation of the industrial relations and decreasing trade union membership.

These conditions demand a new definition of the role of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" against economic and social policies, in the face of the new partners in the public life and of the labour market.

SOCIAL POLICY

The tasks defined by the programme resolution of the VII National Congress of Delegates of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" - the increase of the incomes, reduction of unemployment, ensuring of common access to the health care and education, the protection of the families against poverty, ensuring the benefits from the social insurance - remain valid.

In the changed social, political and economic situation the methods and the means of their realisation call for a new definition.

The introduced reforms require the Union to negotiate effective social protection for the dismissed employees.

Increase of the real incomes

The Union will strive to:

- ensure the increase of the real wages corresponding to the economic growth, liquidation of the disproportion between the workers of the budgetary sector and the industrial sector;
- change the methodology of the establishing of the minimum wage.

Fighting against unemployment

We will demand pro-employment state policy, the co-ordination of the employment programmes, the increase of the competencies of the employment councils and improvement of the standards of the service for the unemployed. The most urgent tasks are:

- the introduction of the compulsory insurance against the unemployment risk,
- the strengthening of the purpose funds such as the Labour Fund, the Fund of the Guaranteed Workers Benefits, the National Fund of Rehabilitation of the Disabled People, in the line of support of employment, legal regulation of the vocational trainings, ratification of the ILO Conventions No. 102 on social insurance, No. 150 on the administration of work, No. 168 on support of employment, No. 173 on protecting of the workers' claims.

Social insurance, protection of the families from poverty

Urgent action is required in order to implement:

- introduction of the categories of social minimum and minimum of existence as legal terms;
- creation and realisation of the schedule of introduction of the guarantees for the social groups in the deepest need for assistance;
- definition of the costs of living in the households of the pensioners and retired persons in order to change the rules of valorisation of the pensions, especially the lowest ones;
- legal regulation of the possibilities of equal opportunities for the disabled persons, guaranteeing e.g. the right for rehabilitation, education, professional and social adaptation on all levels from the central to the local ones;
- continuation of the works on the system of compensation connected to the deregulation of energy prices;
- implementation of the protection against eviction "on street" of the poor and the elderly people.

Social insurance

The introduced reform of the pension insurance generates following urgent tasks:

- implementation of the legislative solutions prepared on the way of negotiations referring to the people employed in specific conditions who due to the character of their work are not able to work until the retirement age in force;
- monitoring of the introduction of the new system;
- protection of the acquired rights of the present pensioners.

Social dialogue

We will develop the dialogue on the tripartite level. We maintain that the definition of the rules of its functioning and the criteria of the representativeness of the partners should be regulated by law.

We will strive to treat the negotiations on the enterprise level as well as on the branch and territorial levels in the collective bargaining as a priority. We consider the use of all possibilities of extending of the collective agreements for all companies of the involved sectors as indispensable.

The foundation of a trade union working group for collective agreements is necessary.

The introduction of the administration reforms and social reforms of the state causes the transfer of new tasks to the self-governing structures and creation of their new levels, which for the Union means that new partners for the collective agreements emerge. This calls for strengthening of the structures on the regional and enterprise (inter-enterprise) levels as their role in collective bargaining will increase.

In the light of the state administration reform the Union should negotiate the pacts of workers' guaranties in specific branches.

Health care

We will strive for full realisation of the right of citizen to the health care. This means the introduction of legislative changes in the Act introducing the common health insurance, which retrieves the core principles of the programme of "Solidarnosc" and AWS. The Union should prepare the expert representatives in the health funds in order to reliably represent the interests of the insured people and to control the work of the reform.

Continuing the work on the health care system the Union will strive to increase the dues for the health funds in order to ensure the realisation of the medical services in accordance to the legal regulations.

We will strive to conclude the negotiations on the branch multi-company collective agreement and to extend it to all the health care enterprises. The change of the funding system and the decrease of the employment have to result in the improvement of the salary payment system and the increase of the salaries.

Education, science and culture

We will see to the progress of the reform of education, science and culture to be in accordance with the programme of "Solidarnosc". We will pay special attention to:

state guarantees of equal and common access to education, science and culture, substantial improvement of the material situation of the employees of this sector, especially of the teachers who carry the biggest burden of the reform of education;

adaptation of the level of financing of these sectors to the tasks which stem from the constitutional obligations of the state;

embrace the culture with the patronage of the state and introduction of the legislation allowing the development of other forms of the patronage.

Protection of a human in the workplace

One of the basic tasks of the Union in the term of 1998 - 2002 will be the strive to reform the system of work protection in Poland. The present system is characterised by the lack of co-ordination of the actions of its separate subjects and of its several parts and a competencies mess.

The priorities of the reformed system are:

- executionable legislation adapting our standards in the matter of safety and health to the demands of the European Union regulations;
- economic incentives enforcing the creation of good working conditions, including the differentiation of the insurance dues depending on the categories of risk of a company;
- the control of the functioning of the work protection system in Poland on all the levels (national, regional, voivod, enterprise) done by the representatives of the government, the employers and the employees. The procedure of the appointment, the composition and the competence of the Work Protection Council in Poland, guaranteeing its tripartite character, demands a special reformatory approach.

- health protection of the working people, which is questionable at the moment, and connected with this evaluation of the exposition of the workers to the hazards in the workplace;
- improvement of the methods of preventing the accidents at work and the system of trainings in safety and health.

Economic policy

The policy of the Union referring to the participation of the workers in the privatisation processes, in order to protect and defend effectively the workers rights, remains a live issue.

The participation of the workers in the management by active participation in the boards of enterprises and influence on the appointment of personal managers in the privatised enterprises is continually required.

There is a need for introduction of regulations in the bills on enterprises enabling the participation of the workers' representation in the management and audit bodies of the companies existing on Polish market.

We recognise the obligation of the state to declare war to corruption, especially among the public institution officers. We stress the need of creation of the office of independent commissioner of the public nominations.

Industrial policy

In order to protect the hitherto existing workplaces and to create the new ones the Union will tend to acquire the influence on the industrial policy of the state.

In our opinion the policy should be based on:

- the assistance of the State and the self-governments for the branches and sectors under restructuring;
- the support for the research in the light of growing competition for Polish enterprises in connection to the planned accession to the European Union;
- the promotion of innovative solutions, entrepreneurship and initiative, productivity and workers adaptation on the competitive labour market;
- fighting monopolies and dishonest competition, including foreign companies;
- limitation of the production which is hazardous for the natural environment by the introduction of new, environment friendly technologies.

We will strive to make the rights of the workers of former state-owned farms (PGR) and the workers of the companies under privatisation equal.

Regional policy

We will demand the adoption of the Act on the regional policy of the State. We recognise that it is indispensable for the unity of the State and its balanced development to create regional programmes of economic development and State policy of balance for the weaker regions. The increase of employment should be the effect of these actions, especially of the development of the infrastructure and direct investments.

Affranchisement of the society - the way to spread the property

The Union made a declaration in favour of the common enfranchisement of the citizens for many times, and there is no change of this opinion. We are of the opinion that the enfranchisement of the citizens is the principal condition of stimulation of economic activity of the citizens, of the democratisation of the economy and of the stability of the economic development.

The Union created many bills on the matter and formulated the basic principles of the affranchisement programme. The Union is of an unchanged opinion that the electoral commitment of AWS on common affranchisement has to be put in the legal frames in 1998.

The AWS Members of Parliament are obliged to enforce yet in 1998 the adoption in the Parliament of the prepared by AWS Acts on affranchisement, especially the bill on the rules of the realisation of the programme of affranchisement of the citizens of Poland referring to the direct and indirect affranchisement.

The Union, also supporting the programme of reprivatisation and the reform of social insurance, is of the opinion that they must be realised in harmony with, not in contradiction to, the programme of affranchisement.

Tax policy

The tax policy should support not only the economic development, but should have pro-family character.

The housebuilding related tax deductions should be sustained to make the housebuilding easier.

One of the basic aims of the Union is substantial reduction of the direct taxes, which in consequence should lead to increase of wealth of the citizens. In the matter of the indirect taxes we act in favour of their simplification. The Union considers the progressive tax system as socially correct.

UNION AFFAIRS

The strengthening and the development of the union

The number of members of the Union reflects the support for the union among the working people and - to a big extend - defines its significance and decides on the amount of material resources. The experience from the last years shows that the identification with the ideological declaration of "Solidarnosc" is not enough to make the workers join the Union.

In the light of decreasing number of members of the Union, X National Congress of Delegates puts an obligation on the National Commission to analyse the reasons of this occurring and to prepare a programme to stop this process and to devote more financial means for the realisation of the relevant tasks. Especially it is needed to evaluate the up-to-date experiences and to establish the most needed means to attract new members to the existing trade union organisations in enterprises. It is also necessary to define the environments where the proposals of organising of the Union are the most likely to be successful. The programme of creating a trade union organisation in private, especially small and medium enterprises (the possibility of introduction of the function of trade union delegate) must become a priority.

We will make the information system more efficient taking an advantage of modern technical means on all levels of territorial and branch structures of the Union.

There is a need for debate on an alternative system of due collecting that would be propitious for increase of the membership.

Taking into consideration the fact that the position of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" on the international arena also depends on the participation of its structures in the international and European branch federations, the National Commission will seek to prepare the activists of the Union to work within the structures of the European Work Councils and in the international institutions for social dialogue.

Adaptation of the structures of the union to the new administration system and to economic situation

Xth National Congress of Delegates puts an obligation on the regional structures of the Union to co-operate and to appoint a common trade union representation to the new public authorities (voivodships and districts).

The National Commission should prepare a project of adaptation of the structures of the Union - regional and branch ones - to the new administration system of the country, to the changing economic situation and to the change of competencies.

The introduction of the self-government reform will make the self-governing bodies become important employers. We need an amendment to the Act on trade union organisations, which will strengthen the role of the regional and branch structures of the Union as a social partner for all levels of self-government.

Strengthening of the financial condition

The National Commission should make efforts to increase the incomes from the dues (by improving the collection of the dues and the membership) and to create an optimal model of the division of the dues among the structures of the Union.

We also need to find other than the dues sources of financing of trade union activities - from the restitution of the assets or economic activities.

The improvement of the financial situation is required for maintaining and improving the strength of the Union resulting from e.g. continuous trainings of the union activists and from having at disposal the substantial backup (Consultation and Negotiation Offices, hired experts).

Trade union trainings

The Union should develop the trainings for the activists and members to prepare them for active and competent work in the new economic and social conditions. Especially there is a need for the trainings:

- on the functioning of the enterprises
- on the protection of the workers' rights (collective negotiations and social pacts)
- for members of the boards of different public and insurance institutions
- on recruitment of new members

International co-operation

The International Co-operation of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" gains new significance in the face of the globalisation of the world economy and of the start of the negotiations on the accession of Poland to the European Union.

The global offensive of the capital calls for global reaction from the trade unions. The white spots on the trade union world map have to be filled. We have to stand up to the situation when the multinational corporations - taking an advantage of the existence of the areas where there are no strong, independent and democratic trade unions - transfer their production and workplaces to these areas offering working conditions and wages below any acceptable standards. This not only leads to inhuman exploitation of the workhorse, often child labour, but also generates unfair competition and causes the increase of unemployment or decrease of level of wages in other regions.

Therefore we will continuously support the actions of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and World Confederation of Labour for respecting in all countries the human rights, labour rights and trade union rights arising from the standards of the International Labour Organisation, for the abolition of the forced labour and child labour,

for the inclusion of the informal sectors to the formal economy, for such liberalisation of trade and investments which involves the social dimension and which is accompanied by sustainable development and job creation.

We will support the creation and development of independent and democratic trade unions - and this is not only the expression of our solidarity with the workers from other countries, but also is a vital interest of Polish workers.

We welcome and appreciate the initiatives of creation of a joint trade union front of the ICFTU and the WCL; we will continuously support such initiatives from both sides that could lead to the unification of the trade union action and possibly to the merger of the two international confederations in the future. We are deeply convinced that a unified action of the independent, democratic and representative trade unions in one international confederation, with respect for the rights and the identity of each affiliate organisation would let us avoid the unnecessary competition and dispersion of the forces and would make the international trade union action more effective.

There are also significant threats arising from the aspirations of the multinational corporations and foreign investors to maximise the profits through lowering the costs of the workforce by reduction of employment, low wages, disrespect for the safety and health and environment as well as by imposing on the employees their maximum availability by flexibilisation of the contracts and collective agreements. We will oppose the phenomena with all means and through common actions with our friendly trade unions from abroad through bilateral co-operation and by participating in actions of international trade union confederations.

In this context this year's affiliation of NSZZ "Solidarnosc" to Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD, participation of TUAC in negotiations on Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and in preparation of the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises become especially significant.

NSZZ "Solidarnosc" will continue to actively participate in the work of the structures of ICFTU, WCL, ETUC and ILO. We will participate in TUAC expert working groups. The International Department, through the international organisations and basing on bilateral contacts, will organise exchange of experience, information and expert reports according the needs expressed by the National Commission and its departments and will support the activities of other structures of the kind in the Union. The international co-operation in trainings and education will be continued.

European integration

In the context of starting negotiation on Poland's integration into the European Union our organisation is facing big challenges not only in our country, but also in the field of international policy.

After regaining the possibility of independent deciding on the fate of Poland, the Polish nation not only has the right to take the due place in the family of the European nations, but also is obliged to participate in creating of the face of free Europe. For Poland the European integration is a chance to ensure security, to strengthen the democracy and to accelerate a possibility of achieving prosperity by the Polish society.

The integration process supports the economic and social development, but also carries costs and threats. They should be carefully identified and minimised. The Union's task, as a social partner, is not only to participate in creating the position of the Polish negotiators, but also to represent the interest of the Union's members in the European Union bodies, mainly through the European trade union movement.

We will strive to increase the significance of the trade union organisations from outside of the European Economic area in ETUC in the pre-accession period. This is especially

important in the context of the imminent debate and decisions of the ETUC connected to the concrete problems of the EU enlargement and related to its regulations. The issues of the transition period for full harmonisation with the *acquis communautaire*, the institutional reform of the EU connected directly with the accession of new countries and also the reform of the common agricultural policy and the restructuring of the Union budget are especially important.

The Commission for the European Integration of the National Commission will co-operate with the branch structures to provide the analyses for the National Commission and the Presidium of the National Commission, which is the starting point for taking the decisions that will be the basis of "Solidarnosc"'s position represented within the ETUC.

The problem of the transition period for the free movement of labour from and to the new member countries is a very important issue both for the Union, in which a difficult discussion is expected both during the accession negotiations and in ETUC. We are of the opinion that the free movement of labour has to be introduced without a transition period which could be a threat for the process of European integration, therefore we will present a detailed argumentation in this matter.

Realisation of the tasks mentioned above will cause that the indispensable and expected by the society reforms will be introduced according to the postulates of NSZZ "Solidarnosc". We count that their realisation will prevent the worsening - and in the long run will create a solid basement for improvement of the material and social situation of Polish workers and their families.

This way at the threshold of the 21st century we will take part in realising the hopes and aspirations of the Polish people, especially the young generation. At the same time we will serve the interest of Poland.