



Brussels, 8 March 2012

**SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE
COMMITTEE
INSURANCE**

**Minutes of the plenary session
25th of November 2011**

Chairperson: Mrs. Elke MAES (UNI Europa Finance)

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The agenda was adopted with some minor changes, re-scheduling some points.

2. Approval of the draft minutes from the plenary session

Minutes of the plenary session from May 2011 were adopted with some changes provided by the social partners¹ to the Commission.

3. Current trends in the insurance sector

- Pensions: presentation² by the CEA followed by an exchange of views

The CEA explained that the topic of pensions was put on the agenda, in order to make UniEuropa aware of the CEA position. It was also stated that this is an issue of common interest. In general, the question is whether in the forthcoming review of the IORP Directive, Solvency II should be used as a basis or not. One important aspect of this discussion is the need to ensure a level playing field between all providers of occupational pension, be they insurance companies or pension funds. UNI Europa Finance agreed to discuss this further.

During the discussion, the political and technical aspects related to this issue were discussed. It was suggested that a clearer position/opinion of EIOPA is needed on the technical side, some more clarification regarding the timeline of the process were requested. In terms of the political aspect, the approach suggested by the CEA e.g. aiming for a level playing field taking account of the national specificities was supported. It was stated that the private sector has to provide balanced solutions.

¹ CEA changed its name to Insurance Europe on the 1st of March 2012. Since the plenary session took place in November 2011 the official name valid at the time e.g. CEA is used in this document.

² The presentation is available at the following link –

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/insurance&vm=detailed&sb=Title

The other questions raised were related to the White paper of the Commission on – working life and pension age and the increase of the pension age in France in 2010 from 60 to 62 was mentioned in particular. The CEA suggested that the broader issue of the demographic challenge was already addressed in the committee in the *2010 joint statement*³. The issue of private pension provision was also mentioned and it was stated that the private sector is extremely controlled so it is basically as regulated as the state sector – there should not be too much regulation. The conclusion was that since trade unions are in general in favour of regulation, it is important how this will be tackled by UniEuropa and as a result what might this regulation do to the efficiency of the companies and sector as such, which then effects employment. Unions should also look at the II and III pillars and whether these should be strengthened?

Further topics discussed were the problems of pension financing and distribution. It was mentioned that from the perspective of many Unions it was specified that more contentious than raising the pension age was, the length of pension contributions. The key question is how to reform the system – e.g. links between private and public systems, regulation in general and regulation of the private pension sector need to be examined.

UNI Europa Finance stated that it does not yet have a unanimous position on this issue to be further discussed in the committee. In this context UNI Finance Europa highlighted the wider problem related to pensions – youth unemployment. Younger workers who are not employed and only have temporary jobs will not be able to contribute to the system and in effect might not be able to earn a pension. It was also stated that discussion regarding the retirement age does not deal only with sectors but with all workers and thus as a broader topic it should perhaps be dealt with by the ETUC.

The CEA mentioned that the point is not to discuss the retirement age in detail as it is sector specific – it differs in construction, electricity, insurance etc. Rather the question to be asked should be what kind of contribution can the Social Partners make, contribution to employment, health, skills and training. The Chairwoman concluded on behalf of UniEuropa that this should not be discussed at the sectoral level. Overall, balanced regulation is needed, which UNI Europa Finance is in favour of.

3. The representativeness study in insurance: presentation by the Dublin Foundation⁴

Eurofound made a presentation on the current state of the representativeness study⁵. In terms of key dates the evaluation committee meeting on the 15th of December 2011 was mentioned. UniEuropa asked what the timeframe was and whether it is possible to still submit comments before the evaluation meeting in December. During the discussion several Social Partners from both the employees and employers' side raised questions regarding the methodology used, they required to be provided with the list of the Foundation's local experts, the list of the

³ The joint statement on the demographic challenge can be found at the following link - http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=8822

⁴ The presentation is available at the following link – http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/insurance&vm=detailed&sb=Title

⁵ The presentation is available here - http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/insurance&vm=detailed&sb=Title

persons contacted in each Member State and they stressed the importance of clear and exact data to be provided for each Member State.

BIPAR provided some clarifications, e.g. that BIPAR is not a federation of brokers but a federation of intermediaries, that the report refers to AGEA and BVK as individual insurers, which they are not. The question of the availability of the draft national reports was also raised. Finally the point was raised by BIPAR, and confirmed by the Eurofound representative, that due to a limited remit, most of the BIPAR members actually fall outside of the scope of the study (use of another NACE code).

The CEA recognised the complexity of carrying out a representativeness study, emphasizing however that it was of crucial importance that the study be of high quality, based on confirmed and accurate data and information, and that its conclusions be exact so as not to be called into question. The CEA provided further oral comments on the contents of the draft studies and stressed that it is crucial that any outstanding issues can still be taken into consideration before the evaluation meeting on the 15th of December. Eurofound responded that comments can still be provided and encouraged everyone to send them as soon as possible.

4. Current trends in the insurance sector

- *Anti-discrimination in access to and the provision of goods and services (The ECJ Test-Achats ruling and its implications): presentation by the CEA*

The CEA highlighted⁶ the huge implications of the ECJ *Test achats* case on the ban of the use of gender in insurance pricing for consumers, the private insurance industry as well as the society in general. After the presentation UNI Europa Finance was asked to reflect on it and consider this topic since not just consumers and business, but also the employment in the sector could be affected as a consequence of the ruling. UNI Europa Finance responded that they will further investigate this issue. It was agreed to discuss this issue in more detail at the level of the Secretariats and of the ISSDC.

5. The demographic challenge in the insurance sector

- *Update by national / company social partners on the follow-up/ implementation of the ISSDC joint statement*

- *Presentation⁷ by the ISSDC Secretariats of the application for EC funding*

The outline of the project was presented jointly by the Social Partners involved. The CEA reminded that this was the first project addressing the demographic challenge in the insurance sector from a pan-European perspective. The project aims to raise the attractiveness of the sector, by sharing and disseminating good practices in the fields of work-life balance, qualifications and lifelong learning, health and safety at work. It includes the publication of a booklet of good practices, a conference on 14 June 2012 and a seminar on 21 September

⁶ The presentation is available at the following link – http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/insurance&vm=detailed&sb=Title

⁷ The presentation is available at the following link – http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/insurance&vm=detailed&sb=Title

2012. It is a major step forward in the follow-up to the ISSDC joint statement of January 2010. The good practices collected for inclusion in the booklet will be selected on the basis of their originality and innovative character. The project is also directly linked to the Europe2020 strategy and the EY2012.

The CEA informed the participants that the project was approved by the Commission. However, the level of financing, was cut to some extent, forcing the Secretariats to review the project organisation and individual initiatives. A provisional timeline was also presented.

- *Presentation of a good practice*

The Young IBA initiative was presented by IBA focusing mainly on issues such as assistance in training and education, attractiveness of this particular career path, skills and qualification⁸.

6. AOB

Dates for the 2012 meetings are as follows - plenary session on the 19th of March, working group meeting on the 5th of June and plenary session on the 19th of November (to be confirmed by the Commission). The Commission asked that if there are any changes in the work programme for 2012, these should be submitted preferably before the end of the year.

⁸ The presentation is available at the following link – http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/insurance&vm=detailed&sb=Title