



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Employment and Social Governance  
**Social dialogue**

**Working Group Meeting of the  
SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE  
TEXTILE AND CLOTHING**

**26 April 2017  
MINUTES**

Chair: Commission

**1. Discussion and approval of the minutes of the last meeting and of the agenda**

The agenda of the meeting and the minutes of the plenary meeting in November 2016 were approved.

**2. European Project "CSR risk assessment tool" – follow-up actions**

The final project conference took place on 24 February. Social partners agreed that the final conference and the project as a whole were successful. Further efforts to ensure that the risk assessment tool is broadly known and used, including a marketing plan are in preparation.

The explicit reference to the risk assessment tool in the recent Commission working document (SWD (2017) 147: Sustainable garment value chains through EU development action, p.22/23) was seen as acknowledging the work and obliging social partner to further invest in dissemination work.

Mr. Marchi confirmed that soon the tool will be available in 6 languages (EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, PT), so to facilitate its use also for SMEs. Mrs. Butaud-Stubbs reported that once the French translation of the tool is available, 2-3 members will be trained to give presentations to the companies in France to inform them about the tool. A number of seminars is envisaged. She reasoned that a company could actually not be 'not interested' in the tool.

For Austria, Mr. Kreuzer confirmed the usefulness of the tool for enterprises to analyse and get aware of potential risks in the supply chain. There are plans for a common event of trade union and employer organisation at national level to promote the use of the tool.

Mr Scalia explained that in the context of the dissemination of the tool, Euratex is in discussion with OECD and with business organisations.

Mr. Chigri (CGT) suggested encouraging national social partners to include the use of the tool into national level social dialogue.

Social partners agreed to have soon a bilateral discussion on the next steps towards a more strategic plan, responding to questions in which way general dissemination and in particular usage in Central and Eastern European Countries could be promoted.

### **3. Presentation of the "Suppliers speak up" – report**

A recent report by the Ethical Trading Initiative Norway (see pdf) was presented by Laurent Zibell. He identified that the report convincingly illustrates the link between purchasing conditions and working conditions; showing how certain purchasing habits actually counteract decent working conditions and CSR commitments. The study proposes a number of concrete steps which could improve purchasing behaviour and thus facilitate better working conditions in supplying companies.

Mr. Zibell wondered in which way the problems and mechanisms which the study identifies for the Far East could also be observed in Europe and whether the study could be an issue for discussion between the social partners at EU level.

Mr. Marchi indicated that the Euratex secretariat has not yet had the opportunity to discuss the report with its members. Euratex representatives also indicated that the report included interesting elements and aspects, however some aspects would not be relevant for EU level social dialogue as the affiliates of Euratex are at a different point in the supply chain than the target audience of the Norwegian report.

IndustriAll understood the need for discussions within Euratex on the issue, but underlined that purchasing behaviour was a topic also to be discussed in social dialogue. IndustriAll invited Euratex to provide its analyses of the report, if possible, at the next meeting.

### **4. Work Programme Textile & Clothing for 2017/18**

It was agreed between the social partners to await the results of the capacity building project before taking decisions on the next work programme. First results were presented during the afternoon part of the meeting.

The final conference of the capacity project will take place on 9 June and subsequently discussions on a work programme should start.

On behalf of IndustriAll, Mr. Lefebvre agreed to this practical arrangement and expressed the wish for a 5 year roadmap for the committee, which could also allow for a strategy and to discuss issues such as innovation.

The Commission confirmed its appreciation for longer term work programmes for Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees.

### **5. EU project "Skills Alliance on Apprenticeships"**

Mr. Marchi informed the Committee that Euratex will submit together with the employer organisations from the leather and tanning and the footwear sectors a proposal for a sectoral blueprint (deadline for submission 2 May). He indicated, that the budget for such blueprint project (around 4 million Euro for a period of 4 years) seems only high at the first glance. When looking at the size of consortium which is required for such

project, the tasks to be performed and the accounting rules to be complied with, the call loses most of its attractiveness for a social partner organisation.

He also regretted that the Commission had not launched the COSME call some time before the call for a sectoral blueprint, which would have allowed feeding the results of the COSME project into the work on the blueprint.

Doubts concerning the blueprint for sectoral skills and its usefulness and compatibility with social dialogue were also expressed by IndustriAll, which had no plans to participate in the call.

Social partners confirmed that a debate concerning the general usefulness of the sectoral blueprint had taken place at the level of the cross-industry social dialogue.

## **6. European project: "Capacity building in the Textile & Clothing European Social Dialogue": Presentation and discussion of results of the national meetings, preparation of the final conference**

Christian Baio (SPIN360) presented the approach and the findings of the project (ppt).

A number of members from the SSDC confirmed the usefulness of the project and that they agreed with the findings presented by Mr. Baio so far. It was highlighted by representatives from employers' and workers' side that the workshops were used to have constructive social dialogue.

It was agreed that, before the final conference in June, SPIN360 should circulate a more detailed draft of its conclusions and suggestions. The discussion at the conference explore which role EU-level social dialogue could play in and for national level social dialogue. It was also requested that the presentations during the conference should provide more concrete elements to better substantiate and illustrate the findings and by that facilitate to draw concrete conclusions.

Mr. Lefebvre asked to distinguish between a good quality of exchange within the dialogue and a good quality of the dialogue allowing building something together and having an impact on the ground. Various gaps and problems in Member States, [ranging from the institutional framework to the capacity of and relation between Social Partners] but also sometimes insufficient communication were found to make such achievements difficult.

Social partners discussed what could be done to improve the work of the Committee, jointly stressing that the focus should be on relevance for the national level. One suggested approach was to look into practical work, such as examples from national or firm level social dialogue within the sector or from other sectors. Reference was also made to a joint document on career development, which the Chemical Industry sector is about to adopt. The Commission indicated to support such efforts, e.g. by providing info where relevant examples from other sectors could be found.

For Hungary it was reported that it was difficult to organise the sector as textile, but also footwear and leather were overall very small sectors, dominated by small and micro-enterprises and not being supported by the government. On the trade union side the situation in Hungary was seen as hindering the development of a social dialogue.

Mr. Marchi thanked the consultants for their work so far and reminded the delegates of their commitments to participate in the final conference.

**7. A.o.B.**  
None