



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue
Social dialogue, Industrial Relations

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR WOODWORKING

19 March 2015
Working Group meeting
MINUTES

A) Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Chair : Frederik LAUWAERT (CEI-Bois)

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

2. Adoption of draft minutes of Working Group Meeting dd. 25 September 2014

The minutes were adopted.

3. Project : Demographic Change.

This project, managed by CEI-Bois and which ran for 10 months, had its final conference on 6 and 7 November 2014, where the final outputs (a.o. a brochure) were presented. A dedicated website was developed. EFBWW expressed their satisfaction and proposed to use the large network of the confederations with a view to a successful follow-up. CEI-Bois pointed at an upcoming session on demographic changes in the Forest Based Industries, organised by FAO and UNECE, where the results of the project would be discussed.

4. Project : “Bolster Up”.

EFBWW informed the meeting on the outcomes of this project (implemented by IG Metall), which aimed at establishing the concept of European Core Qualifications in the EU furniture industry. It was stressed that the goal is not to harmonise VET, but rather to guarantee minimum training standards for cabinet-makers and upholsterers. The fulfilment of certain criteria related to core competencies could become instrumental in terms of mobility and enhance the reliability of EU qualifications. The results of the project (a handbook and a memorandum of understanding signed by the social partners involved) are seen positive by decision-makers in the field. It was proposed to discuss the results of the project in detail during the next working group meeting.

5. Sector skills council.

Making reference to a VET workshop organised by EFBWW the day before, Mr GEHRING reported on internal discussions within EFBWW on the possibility to create a body – within the framework of the sectoral social dialogue – that could act as a sector skills council within the framework of the Woodworking VET working group. As a first step, a questionnaire could be sent to national affiliates in order to

communicate their stand on the subject. In this respect, the human and financial resources issues should be considered. The approach of the furniture VET working group in this area was mentioned, taking into account the interlinkage between the two sectors. Ms LORENZINI then provided more details on the workshop. Although end-users are often not aware of all the existing tools created at European level to recognise skills and competences across borders, the participants recognised that the efforts of the EC in this direction are pushing Member States to work on definitions and standardization of learning outcomes and qualification frameworks. . The participants welcomed the work that the EC has reportedly started to reduce and harmonize as much as possible the number of existing tools. Also they highlighted the importance of creating tools and learning outcome definitions that give enough space for the integration and inclusion of national diversities and insist on quality assurance.

6. European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA)

Mr BJORSTAD (DG EMPL) gave a presentation on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (attached), explaining the objectives and priorities of the EAfA programme. He also pointed at the project of the food and drink sector, and introduced the “New Boost” presidency event in Riga on 22 June 2015. The social partners enquired about the Commission’s possibilities to apply modifications to national education systems with a view to increase the number of apprenticeships. While it was agreed that this is a pure remit of the member states, the social partners were invited to play a pro-active role in this respect, rather than to wait for initiatives from member states themselves. Social partners were also invited to a stakeholder meeting on 23 April 2015.

B) Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

Chair : John VILLADSEN (EFBWW)

1. Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the Working Group meeting dd. 25 September 2014.

The minutes were approved.

3. Strategic Framework on OSH 2014 - 2020.

Mr GEHRING, after having sketched the history of the OSH framework, expressed EFBWW’s criticism on its content, which is considered as weak. According to the workers' representatives, occupational diseases are insufficiently covered by the document, and more initiatives towards streamlining with other policies are necessary. Regarding the implementation of REFIT, a risk towards different levels of protection arises since the key issue of the paper comes down to simplification of legislation. Since the report on the evaluation of legislation by the Danish institute is expected to be published this year, he pointed at the possible value of a position paper on the subject. The employers side agreed with the latter.

4. Project : Perspectives and Challenges of the Woodworking Industries in Europe

CEI-Bois sketched the contents of the project work programme, which was submitted for funding under the 2014 social dialogue call for proposals. The project was not selected for funding, due to its low ranking. However, given the intrinsic value of the project, an updated version of the project is expected to be re-submitted, also tackling the imbalance between the part on OSH and other subjects.

5. European Expert Group for Forest Based Industries (F-BI).

Mr WALL (DG GROW) informed the participants on the background of this expert group, which goes back to the Advisory Committee for Forest Based Industries. He explained the composition of the newly created expert group and its subgroups. He also stressed that no specific financial resources have been foreseen for this structure. Following a question from the workers' side, he stated that wood mobilisation and the recovery of F-BI could be considered as possible subjects for subgroups. The social partners also said that they would expect a stronger focus on the research on the use of wood in the chemical sector.

CEI-Bois will take the initiative for possible action proposed to the subgroups. The social partners will put the topic again on the agenda of the autumn meeting.

6. Operationalisation of 2015 Work Programme

Since the work programme strongly depends on the approval of a number of joint projects, it was agreed that the current work programme would be circulated amongst the affiliates, in order to develop a first draft of a work programme for 2015 – 2016, to be adopted at the next plenary.

7. OSHA Campaign

EFBWW pointed at the possibilities of cooperation with OSHA in their campaign on psycho-social risks. OSHA does not provide funding, but cooperates in providing assistance to projects in the framework of their campaign. Against this background, a project proposal – based on cooperation between the woodworking and furniture SSDCs - was circulated for comments. Although their first reaction was positive, CEI-Bois wanted to discuss the proposal at board level and with affiliates before giving a reply.

8. AOB

The social partners were strongly recommended to respect the deadlines for submitting agendas and participants' lists for their meetings, as well as documents related to reimbursement of expenses.

Annexes :

- List of participants
- Presentation : "European Alliance for Apprenticeships".