



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Social Dialogue, Social Rights, Working Conditions, Adaptation to Change
Social Dialogue, Industrial Relations

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Postal Services Working group meeting on 10 June 2010, Brussels Accident Prevention and Exchange with Other Sectors Minutes

The accident prevention working group meeting was chaired by Mr Spada (POSTEUROP) and the exchange with other sectors working group meeting was chaired by Mr Blikman (POSTEUROP)

1. Accident prevention working group

The Chair (Mr Spada, POSTEUROP) opened the meeting and in his presentation recalled the work programme of the group for 2010, which includes a questionnaire on slips, trips and falls and their consequences for the health of employees for the first half of the year and a benchmarking exercise for the second half. The Chair also presented the draft questionnaire and requested comments.



Accident prevention Questionnaire-EN2.0
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Ms Castellarnau-Dupont (UNI europa) presented excuses on behalf of the members of the working group that were not present. She regretted the fact that the questionnaire was only circulated 3 days in advance of the meeting and only in English, which meant that UNI europa was not in a position to respond in detail on the content of the questionnaire. She reminded the group that this was not an acceptable way of working.

UNI europa considered it less productive to include questions on figures and percentages in the survey. Rather, the focus should be on the measures being taken to prevent slips, trips and falls and on working conditions. UNI europa is therefore in favour of concentrating on the why and analyzing the causes instead of the numbers. UNI europa committed to working on the content of the questionnaire in June and July.

Mr Potykiewicz (POSTEUROP) considered that the approach had to be technical to a certain extent, since the employers need to comply with labour law and health and safety legislation, where a wide variety exists between the 27 Member States. While the causes are important, they could only be explored if the technical basis is established first, including numbers and figures. Mr Potykiewicz also called upon UNI europa to be more proactive and provide direct input rather than reacting to POSTEUROP proposals. He pointed out that this work was done in his free time, which can lead to delays. The Chair also conceded that the questionnaire was circulated rather late, but he welcomed the input from UNI europa and committed to proceeding with the work as soon as UNI europa gives the green light.

Ms Kromjong (POSTEUROP) suggested using the remaining time to discuss the content of the questionnaire in a forward-looking manner. She observed that UNI europa wanted to analyze the causes while POSTEUROP was more interested in numbers, but that both sides were not really far apart and that the positions could be combined.

Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) agreed that there is not much separating the sides, but pointed out the absence of other native speakers of English on the working group. Due to the technical nature of the terminology, this could cause problems. Therefore the questionnaire should be considered in a calm way and further exchanges take place by email, also based upon a French version of the questionnaire. The survey should not be sent out immediately anyway, since that would distract from the follow-up questionnaire of the CSR working group.

Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) proposed reaching agreement on the structure of the questionnaire, so that it comprises questions (1) on the situation with data and figures, (2) on the causes, (3) on solutions and prevention measures and (4) on trade union involvement and social partner activities.

Ms Castellarnau-Dupont (UNI europa) pointed out that parts 2 through 4 on methodologies for prevention, best practices, etc. are more important to trade unions than the collection of data and figures. She committed to working with POSTEUROP to improve the questionnaire.

Mr Potykiewicz (POSTEUROP) suggested relying also on the Hungarian trade union delegates within UNI europa, and welcomed the general direction the discussion took.

The Chair reiterated that from POSTEUROP's point of view, an analysis such as this should always start with data and figures. Mr Manso (POSTEUROP) pointed out, however, that the level of detail requested in the current draft questionnaire was ambitious, and that he is not certain whether it is possible to obtain all the necessary figures. Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) agreed that the level of detail of the figures was very ambitious.

The Chair confirmed that a translation into French would be provided, and that comments from UNI europa should be sent to him by the end of July. He would then commit to work on the questionnaire in August in order to have it ready by the September plenary meeting of the social dialogue committee. He also requested UNI europa to indicate the most important question in its view.

Mr Potykiewicz (POSTEUROP) pointed out that the goal was to present an approved questionnaire at the September plenary. In preparing the questionnaire, the situation in Hungary was very much kept in mind, and the statutory labour protection committee – which contains elected trade union members – was asked for input.

Mr Horvath (UNI europa) highlighted the fact that in Hungary, data on accidents can only be recorded with the approval of the labour protection committee, so there is a system in place to obtain figures and numbers. He considered that a good start has been made, despite the problems stemming from the English translation and the absence of other language versions.

Ms Meidinger (POSTEUROP) called for a common understanding to be reached. To that end, the questionnaire should include both a quantitative and a qualitative part. It should include questions on who is involved in accident prevention and in solutions, but it

should avoid duplication with the work that POSTEUROP has already done. The Chair pointed out that it was not yet clear who would provide the translation into French. Mr Potykiewicz (POSTEUROP) stressed that Hungarian Post had paid for the translation into English, since the original draft was in Hungarian, but that he was not certain who could translate the document into French. Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) proposed that DP DHL could help with the translation in order to minimize the language barriers, unless the Commission had other suggestions.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) underscored that there were no funds or capacity available to the Commission for translations of such documents outside the scope of a project financed following a call for proposals.

Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) thanked DP DHL for its offer and remarked that the quality of the existing English translation was excellent, including the accuracy of difficult technical terminology.

Ms Meidinger (POSTEUROP) offered the help of La Poste's experts in order to do the translation, but that would not be permanent solution.

Before closing the accident prevention working group meeting, the Chair reiterated the timeline for the work, which aims to present the questionnaire at the September plenary, and encouraged UNI europa to send its comments, either in English or in French, if the former should prove too difficult. Ms Castellarnau-Dupont (UNI europa) agreed to this approach.

2. Exchange with other sectors working group

The Chair (Mr Blikman, POSTEUROP) underscored the fact that there was currently no counterpart for him from the trade union side, which had made the work more difficult and meant that he had to prepare for this meeting on his own. He then presented the activities undertaken up to this point.



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Exchange with other

Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) presented apologies from the members of the working group who were absent. He announced that Ms Wiesner would be the new rapporteur for UNI europa and Mr Berta her backup. He pointed out that Ms Berasain was no longer a member of the working group. Ms Wiesner highlighted that UNI europa agreed with the three main themes of the exchange, namely mobility, employability, and experience in the use of EU funds. She suggested exploring the possibility of exchanges with the gas and electricity sectors, which have a phase of significant restructuring behind them.

Ms Meidinger (POSTEUROP) pointed out that the social partners in the electricity sector had produced a study on restructuring.

Mr Baldwin stated that UNI europa had received answers from trade union members of the public services, telecoms and road transport social dialogue committees.

Ms Krojong (POSTEUROP) suggested adding the theme of best change management practices to the possible topics for an exchange with other sectors. Mr Costa (POSTEUROP) agreed with the topics proposed and recommended focusing on older

workers under the employability theme. He pointed out that the cross-industry social partners had conducted a study on the service sector, and proposed to request a presentation from ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME or CEEP on this topic. He also suggested taking up the theme of diversification.

Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) added that the working methods of social dialogue committees could also be a topic for exchange. If another committee should work better than the postal services social dialogue committee, it would make sense to learn from them.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) commented that he could mention the possibility of exchanges with the postal sector at the next meeting of the telecommunications social dialogue committee.

Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) commented that she had contacts with the banking employers' federation in the past and that she would re-establish those contacts.

The Chair summed up the discussion at that point, including the agreement to include change management, older workers, diversification and social dialogue practices among the topics for an exchange. Ms Wiesner (UNI europa) recommended to also include the place of women and part time work in that list. With respect to the list of sectors to be contacted, Mr Schwarz (European Commission) advised to also consider the road transport and public services sector.

Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) considered that the road transport sector would be very interesting, since this sector, just like retail banking and telecommunications, have full territorial coverage in their activities and employment, whereas the activities of other sectors such as the utilities and steel are much more concentrated in specific locations.

Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) pointed to existing contacts with the IRU, the employers' organisation in road transport, and the Chair committed to taking advantage of these contacts.

In response to a question from Ms Meidinger (POSTEUROP), the Chair proposed that the goal of this working group could be a mini-conference to be organised in 2011 with the participation of some of the sectors mentioned. As the working group was just beginning its work, the goals shouldn't be over-ambitious. Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) highlighted the importance of defining a concrete objective for a working group, while Mr Berta (UNI europa) agreed and supported the idea of a mini-conference for 2011.

3. Any other business

Before the session was closed, the dates for the next meetings were confirmed: the plenary meeting will be on 28 September, and the next meeting of the accident prevention and exchange with other sectors working group will take place on 4 November. The latter date might present problems for some UNI europa delegates, but this will be clarified in due time.