



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

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

Brussels,

Minutes of the social dialogue committee in the hospitals sector
Working group "ageing work force"
20 February 2007

The meeting is chaired by Tamara Goosens from EPSU and Valeria Ronzitti from Hospeem. After having welcomed the participants, the agenda is approved and a round table is proposed in order to make acquaintance.

On behalf of the employer's side, Valeria Ronzitti suggests to work on two instruments which could be:

- A common opinion and
- A framework of actions on employment in the hospital sector in order to address the broad issue of demographic changes that concern the sector.

The joint opinion will aim to raise awareness on the phenomenon. Especially on the way demographic changes has an impact on the delivery of services. The chapter of the framework of actions should focus on the need to adapt the workplace, to train the work forces at all levels, to avoid any discrimination (intergenerational approach), to set up flexible working patterns.

On behalf of the employee's side, Tamara Goosens deems necessary to start focusing on the framework of actions, which need to include a monitoring system, enabling social partners to know the situation and where they go. Trade unions also proposed to build one chapter of the framework of action around the subject of Equal opportunities and diversity (age, ethnic and cultural background, gender, disabilities) instead of addressing only the situation of the older workers, bearing in mind that the 2007 European year is devoted to this issue.

Other subjects, which needed to be taken into account in this framework are according to the trade unions: working conditions and health & safety of staff and patients (e.g. work-life balance, working time arrangements, flexible retirement, stress, violence at the workplace)

It is proposed that the joint opinion will lay down broad principles and the framework of action should come into details on specific issues to the hospital sector. Godfrey Perera suggests that common issues related to the demographic changes should be first

identified due to the variety of situations and that a common seminar should be organised in order to share experiences and good practices, which could lead to common findings..

The working group should present guidelines and draft paper regarding these tools during the next plenary session scheduled on 6 June 2007. Attention should be drawn on the need to avoid as far as possible overlappings with the work geared by the groups on "recruitment and retention" and on "skill needs".

After separate meetings, the employees' side suggested to work on a **draft framework of action**, and mentioned 4 topics which could be addressed in this framework:

1. Diversity management; equal opportunities
2. Work life balance
3. Health and Safety
4. Working conditions

This framework of action should be a flexible tool likely to be used in all countries irrespective of their peculiar situation.

Employers propose that affiliate members present joint case studies (good or bad practices) with the view to launch a first common exercise on the theme, during the next working group (9 November)