



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES DG

Social Dialogue, Industrial Relations

## **DRAFT**

Subject: Minutes of the meeting

Meeting: Sectoral social dialogue committee, Chemical Industry  
Working Group Education, Training, Lifelong Learning

Time and place: 20-02-2006  
Centre Borschette, 36 Rue Froissart, Brussels

### **1. Welcome by the Chairpersons and the EU Commission and technical announcements**

### **2. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda is approved

### **3. Overview of currently undergoing and by the European Commission financially supported initiatives and projects in the Chemical Industry**

Such an overview does not exist. It is decided to establish a tripartite list of initiatives that is regularly updated.

### **4. Report on the Follow-up meeting to the London Social Partners Conference 2005 on 23 January 2006 in Wiesbaden, Germany with presentation and discussion of the updated COMENIUS project proposal Simon Marsh (ECEG), Reinhard Reibsch (EMCEF)**

The findings of the meeting on 23 January in Wiesbaden are not included in the project application paper from Prof. Gros.

Mr Marsh presents a paper with answers of social partners to the questionnaire. The paper is distributed.

Mr Reibsch adds that the points mentioned in the answers should be integrated into the Gros paper. Some points are missing, like the role of the social partners and a specific mentioning of the situation of girls.

Discussion:

- Mühl: There is a timing problem. The deadline for submission of the proposal is the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.
- Participants agree that Prof. Gros should include the results and comments of the social partners.

### **5. Overview of the Commissions' activities on Demographic Changes Julius op de Beke, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**

Mr Op de Beke is making a presentation on demographic change. See attached file. He presents the respective statistics that show the necessity to act, and the key role of the social partners in the areas of work-life-balance, flexibility, active aging, gender equality

Discussion:

Q: Is a longer life working time an answer? In Sweden and Japan the wages go down for older workers.

A: Flexibility and migration influence demography itself, but other measures are of course possible.

Q: The Netherlands have the problem of people leaving the country. In Africa there is a high fertility rate, but also a huge problem with HIV.

A: In the USA there are 200.000 Europeans doing research. A lot of migrants in Europe do not contribute to the welfare states.

Q: Prolonging working life does not help because of youth unemployment.

A: Countries with the longest working life have the lowest youth unemployment, early retirement schemes are expensive and drive labour costs up.

Q: What can the social partners do?

A: There is a huge demand for part time work, but it requires flexibility and there is a price for it, e.g. more office space is necessary.

### **6. Overview of the Commissions' activities on the European Year for Workers' Mobility Tobias Muellensiefen, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**

Mr Müllensiefen talks about the European Year for Workers' Mobility 2006.

There is regional skills shortage versus regional unemployment. Mobility is still low: Employees change their jobs every 10.6 years in Europe as opposed to 6.7 years in the USA.

The EU wants to facilitate mobility. 2006 is the year of the review of restrictions of access to labour markets for the New Member States. There is no evidence of a massive influx and welfare state spending. UK and Ireland did well without the restrictions.

A new portal of EURES will be launched with access to all job ads.

The EU prepares an action plan on skills and mobility.

The proposal on portability and pension rights promotes mobility.

The aim of the year is an exchange of good practice and a deeper analysis of mobility barriers.

A launch conference takes place on 20-21 February and an EU wide job fair will be organised, a mobility award is foreseen as well as an EU barometer study on mobility. Projects from the call for proposals 2005 are under way. A second call will be launched in 2006.

Discussion:

- There is a report on the transitional measures (restrictions) that focuses on macroeconomic developments.
- Mobility is increasing in the age groups 25-34 years and 35-44 years.
- Drivers for mobility are an increased salary and intercultural experience. Problems are language and social/family networks.
- Intra-company mobility for non-academics should be increased.
- An ILO study shows that job changes increase productivity if they do not occur too often. The Danish example shows that a high rate of job changes increases employment.

**7. State of play on the Social Partners Survey on different Education, Training and Lifelong Learning Systems**  
**Simon Marsh (ECEG), Jeannette van Dongen (EMCEF)**

Mr Marsh presents the survey. See attached file.

**8. Any other business**

Chairman of the meeting: Simon Marsh  
Commission representative: Markus Handke