

Temporary Agency Work

EU Sectoral Social Dialogue

Budapest, November 13th 2007

- TAW sectoral social dialogue committee was established in 2000 (one out of 35 sectoral committees now in place)
- A better knowledge of the reality of our industry, especially through the conduct of a research on “Agency work in an enlarged EU” carried out by the Dublin Foundation in 2006 and exchange of case studies during EU SSDC meetings
- A better understanding of the sectoral social partners and their policy priorities
- Support for the strengthening of national social dialogue, especially in the new EU Member States: Roundtable organised in Poland in 2006 and in Hungary today
- Joint-declarations:
 - In 2001, on the objectives of the European Directive on Agency Work, which stipulated that *“This directive should have as fundamental aim to reach a fair balance between the protection of agency workers and enhancing the positive role that agency work may play in the European labour market”*
 - In 2007, on the Flexicurity debate launched by the Commission
- Joint project submitted on « Transitions & vocational training »
 - Grant request submitted to the European Commission on a project called: “Temporary Work Agencies’ contribution to transitions in the EU labour market: The example of vocational training”

Benefits for Eurociett of a structured social dialogue

- Improvement of the image of the industry
 - Seen as a socially responsible and legitimate industry
 - Development of a better understanding of the reality of the sector (especially through joint surveys being conducted by independent research institutes)
 - Promotion and support to national sectoral social dialogue (allowing the industry to be better recognised at national level)
- Ability to influence debate on key European policy topics
 - Joint-declarations (AWD, Flexicurity)
 - Surveys published
- Capacity to identify and address controversial issues between workers and employers
- Support provided by the European Commission
 - Meeting rooms, translation, accommodation and travel expenses, draft of minutes

- Main objectives of Eurociett are:
 - To allow the development of TAW activities in a positive and stable environment
 - To ensure a suitable regulatory framework for our industry to operate in, allowing our services to develop in a sustainable way while at the same time providing protection to the agency workers
- Eurociett is not against regulation as such: we are calling for the right level of regulation
 - That means that for some countries Eurociett is calling for lifting unjustified restrictions while in some other countries without specific regulation on TAW we welcome any relevant regulatory framework
- Regulatory frameworks can be implemented in different ways:
 - Purely legislative procedure, collective bargaining and/or self-regulation (with a mix in countries like France, Belgium, Spain)
 - However, in some other countries like the Nordic countries or the Netherlands, sectoral industrial relations have been privileged to define the suitable environment for our industry:
 - In these countries, the agency work legal framework is reduced to a minimum; regulation of the industry is done through collective bargaining, requesting a common agreement between employers and employees

- To base discussions and negotiations on facts and figures
 - The TAW industry is still suffering from a lot of misrepresentations about its reality
 - Any criticisms should be based on concrete and representative case studies and data, and not on dogmatic or emotional positions
- To recognise the positive role TAW may play in the labour market
 - Job creation impact: TAW helps to create jobs that would not exist otherwise
 - Stepping stone function, helping jobseekers to (re)enter the labour market and moving upwards
 - Facilitating transitions in the labour market (from education to work, between different types of contracts, between work and family life)
- To reach a fair balance in terms of regulation between the development of TAW activities and the protection of workers
 - Eurociett is convinced that the sustainable growth of our industry should be based on these two inseparable pillars. In several countries, our industry is still hampered by unjustified restrictions or discriminatory measures
- To take into account the international environment
 - Through the adoption of its Convention 181, the ILO has in 1997 officially recognised our industry and the positive contribution it brings to the labour market
 - Hungary has ratified C181 in 2003: Guidelines provided by the Convention should be the framework of your national industrial relations
 - The EU has also recognised temporary agency work as a way to balance flexibility with employment protection (Kok report in 2003, Flexicurity Communication in 2007).
- Therefore, negotiations between social partners should not be about whether services provided by temporary work agencies should be prohibited or restricted
 - but on *“how to remove obstacles to temporary work agencies rendering them effective and attractive intermediaries in the labour market”* as the European Commission advocated it in 2003