Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Telecom

Working group meeting on 27 March 2012, Brussels

Minutes

Mr Healy (UNI Europa) chaired the meeting.

1. Sharing the 2012-2013 SDC work programme

Ms Delacotte (ETNO) presented the work programme point by point (see annex). The Chair highlighted that the work organisation working group should not remain frozen for 2 years. There was a discussion regarding contacts with other sectors, the planned exchanges on key common issues of interest and the resource constraints of ETNO and UNI Europa.

The social dialogue committee adopted the work programme.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) welcomed the recognition of the importance of full participation in social dialogue meeting and reminded participants of the presentation by representatives of the postal services social dialogue committee on corporate social responsibility. He announced that at the next social dialogue meeting on 12 June, the Commission would present the planned revision of the state aid guidelines for broadband.

2. Follow-up of the Good Work Good Health project

Ms Delacotte gave a presentation on the impact assessment analysis.

Good Work Good
Health Project

The Chair pointed out that the final report should be in the name of both ETNO and UNI Europa. Committee members discussed the result and whether more time was needed for providing feedback. The consensus was that the report needs to be finalised following a conference call in April, but that the content of the good practice guidelines would continue to be important. The work of the SDC on issues of health and safety will continue on a longer-term basis.

3. Skills and training

The Chair reported on the conference call that had taken place to finalise the project application's scope and budget. Committee members discussed in particular the external expertise necessary and the different research institutes that could carry out these tasks.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) highlighted the rules for subcontracting and pointed out that the social partners would be informed once the call for proposals is published.

4. Ageing workforce

Mr Steeg (ETNO) presented the activities of Deutsche Telekom in the field of age management.

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Presentation DT topic

The Chair and several participants welcomed the presentation. The discussion centred on the importance of support for such policies from top management and the differing approaches in different countries, with working time accounts being very popular in Germany. Mr Steeg also highlighted the importance of recruitment, leading to mixed-age teams to transfer knowledge and valorising the experience of older workers.

The Chair and Mr Manasseh (UNI Europa) expressed the view that in the UK, the approach to ageing was very much financially driven, with defined benefit schemes not meeting their liabilities and people therefore needing to work longer. There is also a cultural dimension, which sees youth as a value in itself.

Mr Andresen (UNI Europa) reported on the Danish partial retirement provisions in the new collective bargaining agreement. Ms Delacotte (ETNO) explained France Telecom's efforts and the provisions in the collective agreement to deal with the changing demographics. The goals are to change corporate culture, to encourage active and employable older workers, to valorise their experience by sharing their knowledge, to provide career accompaniment and a transition to retirement, and to improve working conditions for older workers. Ms Lejeune-To (UNI Europa) highlighted the importance of work-life balance along the entire career and the importance of diversity and mixed teams.

Mr Heikkilä (UNI Europa) reported on the recent tripartite agreement in Finland, which raises the partial retirement age. Models for the company-level are still being developed. Unfortunately the unemployment rate for older workers is increasing.

Given these examples, the Chair encouraged additional work of the SDC on this topic, maybe leading to a joint statement on principles. A presentation by the UNI Europa member from Finland at the next meeting would be very welcome.

Ms Delacotte (ETNO) wondered whether the discussion should take into account the issue of diversity, which is larger than just demographics. Mr Steeg cautioned that a joint statement would need to be implemented and monitored, for which there are no resources. The telecoms companies are too diverse to go beyond a rather general document.

The Chair underscored that nothing should be ruled in or out at this point. One additional presentation would add more background information, so that the committee can discuss the next steps.

Annex: Biannual working programme for 2012-2013

1. **General issues**
- Limit working group agendas to two topics in order to provide enough time for in-depth discussion
- Share best practices of companies and national social partners on topics related to social dialogue in order to provide the SDC an impulse for its work
- Improve the exchange with other sectors on key common issues of interest.
- Improve the exchange with the DG education concerning training issues
- Ensure broader participation from members by setting a clear agenda, increasing contributions and assigning responsibilities

2. **Health and Safety**
- Follow up on the GWGH project's results, especially on the impact assessment
- Presentation of good practices from companies and social partners which want to be quoted as an example

3. **Skills and Training**
- Launch the working group on skills and training and define a detailed work programme
- Project to be submit to the Commission
- Follow up on the project's results, especially on the future skills and training needs in the ICT sector to anticipate change and the training plans based on the project's outcome.

4. **Information from the European Commission**
- Invite DG Information Society on a regular basis to provide the SDC with information and updates on regulatory affairs.
- Participate in the impact assessment of relevant regulation.
- Invite other DGs to present information on issues interesting the TELCO sector

5. **Work Organisation**
- Temporarily frozen
- To be discussed in 2012/13
- Redefine scope of the working group