



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 Telecom

Steering group meeting on 26 October 2009, Brussels

Minutes

Mr Siebern-Thomas (European Commission) opened the meeting and presented the agenda.

1. Review of the functioning of the sectoral social dialogue committee

UNI europa accepted the transformation of this working group into a steering group meeting, but as a principle cannot accept budget reasons for cancelling working group meetings. While the social dialogue committee is not a lobbying committee, the Commission should regularly come before the committee to inform and consult. This did not happen in the past. Translation and interpretation facilities for the meetings are extremely important, especially for participants from new Member States. With respect to the participants in each meeting and working group, there is a need for flexibility instead of a rigid list.

UNI europa also pointed out the technical issue of communications problems with ETNO since the departure of Ms Machilsen, and highlighted its wish for short communication channels. Regarding the 2010 work programme UNI europa suggested to concentrate on the follow-up to previous work, such as the questionnaire on call centre guidelines, rather than launch big new projects. The Good Work Good Health projects will of course be an important activity in 2010.

ETNO acknowledged some temporary difficulties resulting from the departure of Ms Machilsen, but asked for patience and to send all correspondence to the five or six correspondents that are actively participating in European social dialogue. ETNO will update this contact list and circulate it in the coming days. ETNO also called for more efficiency at meetings, and suggested to share best practices with other sectoral social dialogue committees.

The Commission pointed out that half-day meetings should be avoided, as the cost to organise them is similar to full-day meetings. The consultation of social dialogue committees during the preparation of the Commission's impact assessments is contained in recently adopted guidelines, and DG Information Society could certainly be invited to address a future meeting of the sectoral social dialogue committee. In general, issues that affect all sectoral committees are usually addressed at the regular Liaison Forums. It is possible to imagine an exchange of practical experiences with other sectoral social dialogue committees in the form of an "away-day" in the framework of a project. The Commission also clarified that there is no fixed limit to the number of working group members, apart from the limitation on the number of reimbursements per meeting.

UNI europa stressed its preference for regular working group meetings with interpretation over steering group meetings, and supported more input from DG

Information Society into the work of the committee, especially on current issues such as green ICT or the digital dividend.

2. Preparation of the plenary meeting on 8 December 2009

As a result of the discussion the following items will be on the agenda:

- information point on the Good Work Good Health project
- CSR: discussion of joint statement proposed by UNI europa, after feedback to be provided before the plenary by ETNO
- Commission information point on social considerations in public procurement (to be confirmed)
- Skills and training: presentations by experts from Austria on a certification system that is the result of a social partner agreement, and from France from the Observatoire des Métiers des Télécommunications (to be confirmed)
- Commission information point on "Green ICT" (to be confirmed)
- discussion and adoption of the 2010 work programme (draft to be circulated beforehand by UNI europa)
- discussion of an exchange with other sectors

The Commission will circulate a draft agenda to the social partners for their modifications and feedback.

3. Preparation of the work programme for 2010

The health and safety working group will focus on accompanying the Good Work Good Health project. For the skills and training working group there is a need for more focus, and after the UNI europa will communicate on this issue with ETNO after its internal steering committee meeting in November. The work organisation working group should focus on the follow-up to the call centre questionnaire, summarizing the results and discussing the next steps for its dissemination. Regarding translations, the Commission suggested the submission of a project proposal, or approaching the cross-industry social partners. ETNO preferred to keep the topic of CSR as a part of the work organisation working group, and the Commission suggested considering combining working groups, to avoid fragmentation of the committee's work and address the problem of efficiency and attendance at working group meetings. There was no new information regarding the diversity working group, and its status will need to be assessed by the social partners.