



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue
Social dialogue, Industrial Relations

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Telecommunications

Working group meeting on 12 June 2012, Brussels

Minutes

Mr Healy (UNI Europa) chaired the meeting. The agenda was approved with a minor modification: the order of points 2 (skills and training) and 3 (demography and the future of work) was reversed.

1. Revision of the EU Guidelines for the application of State aid rules in relation to rapid deployment of broadband networks

Mr Gaal (European Commission) presented the new draft guidelines.



Revision of the State
aid Broadband Guideli

Mr Steeg (ETNO) asked about the calculation of state aid intensity and the thresholds. Mr Gaal replied that the aid intensity will vary depending on the context, i.e. while it may be 30 to 40% in Germany, it could be 80 to 90% in Scotland.

Several UNI Europa members criticised the general competition logic applied by the Commission, which is maintained even while for vital broadband services such as those linked to health or education where oftentimes operators don't even enter a bid. The UNI Europa participants asserted that this policy leads to operators picking and choosing where to provide coverage, while rural areas remain "white". Europe is losing its technological leadership as a result, with prices increasing in rural areas.

Mr Gaal agreed that the objective is to provide broadband coverage everywhere, but competitive conditions are necessary to avoid having to provide continuous state aid year after year. The loss of technological leadership is a complex topic and cannot be linked to the broadband guidelines. In response to a request for clarification, Mr Gaal explained that paragraph 11 of the guidelines was intended to specify that intranet used by public authorities is not subject to state aid rules. He agreed to give another presentation to the social dialogue committee once the guidelines have been finalised.

Ms Delacotte (ETNO) informed that ETNO would provide a written contribution to the Commission before 3 September.

2. Demography and the future of work

Mr Lindhardt (UNI Europa) gave a presentation on the demographic challenge in Denmark and on the measures taken by the government and by social partners.



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Mr Lindhardt explained that the tripartite talks on the measures had failed after the government wanted to eliminate some holidays, to which the unions could not agree. The Chair was sceptical of the mechanical link between retirement age and average life expectancy, since this does not take account of individual hardships and job-related diseases. Ms Salis-Madinier (UNI Europa) underscored the need to take into account the different longevity of white-collar and blue-collar workers. Mr Goncalves (UNI Europa) pointed out that working longer also means that jobs must be available for older workers, something that is lacking in reality. Similarly, Mr Da Silva (UNI Europa) cautioned that there may be a difference between the legislative wishes and the reality on the ground.

Mr Lindhardt clarified that the provisions on retirement were set by legislation, while the provisions on training were part of collective agreements.

Ms Delacotte and Mr Steeg (both ETNO) welcomed the presentation and found it very useful to get detailed information on the Danish case, especially on the link between legislation and collective agreement between the social partners.

3. Skills and Training

Ms Dedden (UNI Europa) presented the state of play of a possible project focusing on training and the possible setup of a sector skills council. The call for proposals had not yet been published by the Commission, but the social partners could already start drafting the proposal in the next few weeks.

Ms Delacotte (ETNO) stated that two research institutes had responded positively to a preliminary request for tenders, with a third institution submitting an offer by the end of June. It still needs to be decided whether UNI Europa or ETNO would be in the lead and who would be project manager. Both are key decisions and depend on the availability of resources at both organisations. The project will be submitted to the ETNO board for approval only once the application is finalised.

Ms Dubois (UNI Europa) offered to help work on the project. Mr Goncalves (UNI Europa) proposed that Ms Delacotte and Ms Dedden should be the project's leaders. Ms Catapano (UNI Europa) stated that she would approach Telecom Italia to motivate them to participate in the project as part of the ETNO team.

Both sides agreed to organise a teleconference to discuss the proposal and to divide the work of drafting of the application. Only then would it be decided which organisation submits the proposal to the Commission.

The Chair cautioned that the next meeting of the social dialogue committee will take place on 24 September, which may be after the application deadline.¹

4. Any other business

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) informed participants that in the near future, the numbers of their ID cards or passports would need to be provided in advance in order to enter Commission buildings.

The Chair thanked the interpreters and closed the meeting.

¹ The application deadline for call for proposals VP/2012/009 has since been fixed for 22 October 2012 by the Commission.