



European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Local and Regional Governments
Plenary Meeting
2 December 2015
Minutes

Morning session chaired by Malin Looberger (CEMR, SALAR)

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the minutes of last meeting

The minutes of 22 May have been adopted, with an additional sentence under point 5: “there are still ongoing discussions on the employees’ side to further evaluate the representativity study”.

2. Report of the meeting with Mr Jonathan Stabenow, Policy assistant in charge of social dialogue at the Cabinet Thyssen (20/11/2015) and follow up:

The chair made a short outline of the meeting, organised in the frame of the agreement on the joint statement of our SSDC in May, following the relaunch of social dialogue Summit last March. The members of the steering group committed to follow the process and implementation of the relaunch, even if it is unclear where it leads us at this stage. It has been the occasion to clarify our positions, expectations and needs toward the Commission.

The steering group stressed the **importance of social dialogue and capacity building to face the challenges and meet the needs of employers and employees of local and regional administrations**. The number of meetings has been identified as a key issue, because it is impossible to reach agreements without discussing them during SSDC meetings.

The link between cross-sectoral and sectoral committees needs to be deepened and strengthened.

Mr Stabenow underlined the **high representativity of CEMR and EPSU, which reinforces the relevance of the SSDC on LRG**.

The key question is to determine who will be the relevant partners when the European Commission will invite representatives to the thematic workshops? It has been made clear that no discussion can concern local and regional governments without involving our SSDC.

Stefano Martinelli (DG EMPL) ensures that ‘dedicated hearings’, along with ‘cluster committees’ will be organised and the Commission will invite cross-sectoral and sectoral social partners. The DG EMPL is seeking for interests expressed by our SSDC so when there is something of interest, we should signal that we want to be involved: there are windows for opportunity to be seized.

Overall, our SSDC should foster the transmission of inputs and sharing of experience and good practices to the Commission.

3. Follow up of the Seminar on digitalisation (21/09/2015)

The discussions during the seminar have been very constructive, based on the working documents and entailed the drafting of on a joint declaration (which has been redefined as 'joint working document' after a lively discussion) on the challenges and opportunities of digitalisation for local and regional administrations, and an academic report from Jane Lethbridge.

The methodology has been confirmed as the good one and the appropriate template for next Seminars in the frame of CEMR-EPSU joint project. Members will have to create a strong link between the activities of the project and the SSDC and improve the visibility of our works.

The follow up of the Seminar will be enshrined in the implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy and the SSDC has been invited to take actions on the public consultations launched, notably on the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020. Eurofound will work on a project on digitalisation, which will deserve attention and cooperation.

The joint working document gives us the legitimacy to intervene in the field of digitalisation as social partners.

Its content will be integrated in the document to be adopted during the final conference in 2016 and is intended to adopt recommendations.

Due to the timeframe set for comments and inputs, some members regretted the impossibility to add some amendments. This will be possible within the drafting of the document for the final conference.

Calculation of working hours, quality of jobs (in line with well-being at work), transfer of power to IT providers, and vulnerability of new digital services have been pinpointed as issues to be addressed, especially since 2/3 of the jobs in the 10-15 years to come will be digitalised.

All digitalisation-related issues will be integrated in our next Work Programme.

Members adopted the joint working document and praised the very discussions held on this item of the agenda and agreed to resume the exchanges during the final conference.

4. Review of the rules of procedure:

After numerous debates on the review and relevant updates, the rules of procedure of the SSDC on LRG and of the steering group are formally adopted.

The Chair mentions that on the employees' side there are still ongoing discussions to evaluate the representativity study.

5. General discussion on the Seminar on migration (27/01/2016):

The Chair stressed the **importance for members to be present and prepared in order to have the best outcomes possible**. The Seminar will address key issues related to the current migration crisis and the **overall impact of migration on local and regional administrations and the workplace, the employers and their employees**. It will also be the occasion to update the guidelines on migration and anti-discrimination adopted.

Constructive exchanges enabled to frame the content of the Seminar, aiming at underlining the **necessity to bring LRA in the process and in the management of the crisis and harnessing our respective knowledge, experiences sharing and collection of good examples so LRA can implement the best solutions to welcome and integrate migrants and refugees**.

As it has been done for the last Seminar, members will receive a draft report from the external expert, along with draft working document and recommendations from the Secretariats.

Members agreed to address a limited number of issues, notably **social housing, labour market access, integration processes, impact on the workforce, the workplace and on the provision of public services**.

They have been invited to send their inputs and submit some ideas in order to ensure the high quality of the discussions, the ownership of the seminar and the continuation of the reflections within the SSDC (particularly by including a follow up item in the agenda of the next Working Group meeting).

6. Brainstorming on the methods of work of the SSDC, the organisation of next activities and the enhanced involvement of members

Stefano Martinelli presented the outline of the Work Programme 2016 of the European Commission, highlighting the key dossiers of Occupational Health and Safety, Skills Agenda, Labour Mobility, New Start for Parents, consolidation of the social pillar of the EU and the willingness to deepen capacity-building of social dialogue.

The momentum of 2015 has been the relaunch of social dialogue (high level summit of 5 March) and the inclusion of social dialogue aspects in the European Semester process. He finally insisted on the determination of Commissioner Marianne Thyssen to reach a more fluent exchange of information and inputs between social partners and the Commission where relevant.

The Chair organised a tour de table, which enabled to express the following requests and concerns:

- **Importance for the steering group to know how to prioritise the agendas of next meetings and to focus on a limited number of topics** in order to be more efficient and more relevant, taking into deeper account the annual Work Programmes of the Commission;
- **Bridge the gap between the national and local-regional representatives from both employers and employees' sides from each country**, particularly to harness the usefulness of discussions and knowledge collected;

- Expectations regarding more regular translation of background documents, an **enhanced visibility of our works in the respective countries and a more active involvement of members from a broader geographical scope;**
- **Improve the pedagogy on the policymaking process at EU level and the leverages to influence legislation,** in particular thanks to more legal background;
- **Suggestion to install workshops or task forces** on the different issues on the table and on the agenda, relying on members' more dynamic participation.
- Hot topics distinguished: capacity-building in countries where not both sides are at each side of the negotiating table, work-life balance, new skills agenda, project and thematic seminars, information and consultation of workers (on that point, CEMR will reassess its position, depending on the outcomes of the current negotiations in the sister committee central administration).

7. A.O.B.

- **Project 'Promoting Employers' Social Services in Social Dialogue (PESSIS III)**
Christine Jakob briefly presented the new project after it has been approved by the Commission: EPSU will be a full partner and CEMR will be an observer for this new phase project. EASPD (European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disability) leads the project. The PESSIS III will explore the mapping of five new countries on the structures of social dialogue in the social services sector- UK, HU, RO, PT, SL. Many barriers will need to be dealt with including issues regarding the lack of attractiveness of the sector, recruitment and retention of staff, the increasing cross-border mobility of workers, the lack of professional qualifications and training, the ageing of the workforce, etc.).
- **1st phase consultation on work-life balance**
Malin Looberger presented CEMR's discussions and insisted on the fact that this will be a big task to respond as employers. EPSU will inform CEMR of its answers (through ETUC), so the steering group can examine the possibility to draft a joint response, despite the short deadline. In any case this is only the 1st phase and the SSDC will have more opportunities to collaborate during the 2nd phase.
- **Gender quality strategy:**
Christine Jakob explained that there will be no new Gender Equality Strategy but a working staff document, with an incurred very low value. This sends a negative signal.
- **Calendar 2016 (SSDC + project meetings)**
The Chair communicated to the members the Calendar 2016.
- End of the meeting

8. Next meeting: SSDC Working Group meeting Friday 19 February 2016, Brussels