



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

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

### **SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE POSTAL SECTOR**

**Plenary session**

**MARRIOTT HOTEL, BRUSSELS  
6 May 2015**

**Draft minutes**

#### **1. Opening of the session**

The plenary meeting was chaired by Mr Bailly (POSTEUROP), who introduced Mr Scott (UNI Europa) as newly designated vice-chair of the committee and presented the main issues to be discussed during the morning session of the meeting: namely, the latest developments in terms of the Universal postal service and the Digital Single Market, as well as the European Social Dialogue.



Draft presentation  
postal context SDC PI

#### **2. Main Commission initiatives related to the postal sector**

Mr Stengg (European Commission, DG GROW) outlined the principal features and trends of the European postal sector as exposed in the "Implementation report 2015". Then, he focused on the most relevant problems that the Commission is facing on the Universal Service Obligation (USO): in particular, the USO's increasing costs – and decreasing volumes –, the lack of financing and state aids, and the fact that the needs of users largely change across Member States but they also remain mostly unknown. Mr Stengg said that no revision of the Postal Services Directive (PSD; as last amended by Directive 2008/6/EC) is foreseen in 2015/16. In addition, he announced that the "Consultation on cross-border parcel delivery" was launched on that day and will be closed at the end of July. This consultation represents the follow-up of two previous initiatives of the Commission: the "Roadmap for completing the single market for parcel delivery: Build trust in delivery services and encourage online sales" and the "Green paper: An integrated parcel delivery market for the growth of e-commerce in the EU".



Stengg.socialdialogu  
e.may2015.pptx

Both Mr Bailly and Mr Scott recalled the importance of a flexible management in the USO market, as the needs of customers change across countries. Mr Stengg underlined that the European Commission will not move first on these issues, but the debate should start from Member States. Since the postal market is highly fragmented in the EU, the common goal should be the attempt to improve some selected strategic services instead of a generic intervention on the whole sector.

Ms Mir Roca (UNI Europa) said that it is fundamental to preserve the social dimension of the sector and that lowering workers' salary cannot be the way to make services more competitive. Mr Stengg pointed out that it is up to Member States to decide on the flexibility of working conditions, the Commission can only fix some principles and benchmarks.

### 3. Recent developments in European social dialogue



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Mr Schwarz (European Commission, DG EMPL) explained the Commission's strategy for giving a new start to social dialogue after the high level event of 5 March, and remarked the role of better regulations policy. Among the follow-up actions are meetings between Commission Vice-Presidents and European social partners on specific policy areas (e.g., investment plan; energy union) and the creation of two thematic groups led by the European cross-industry social partners: one would work on social partner involvement in European economic governance and the other on strengthening the involvement of social partners in policy development, including the relationship between better regulation and social dialogue.

Mr Bailly enquired about the Commission's approach to the implementation of European social dialogue agreements through Directive. Mr Schwarz explained that the Commission was working on clarifying the approach to be followed when social partners request implementation by directive and that it was assessing such requests case-by-case on the basis of impact assessments. The two implementation mechanisms foreseen in the Treaty (autonomous and by legislation) are equally binding and of equal value, but recent developments (such as enlargement) have increased the diversity of industrial relations systems, making autonomous implementation more difficult and leading to questions in the Council about the representativeness of EU-level social partners in case of legislative implementation.

Mr Scott recognised the relevance of the question, and Mr Schwarz emphasised that the question of whether there would be a public consultation about social partner agreement was still being discussed within the Commission. Ms Mir Roca expressed her surprise about the timing of the Commission's new approach to impact assessments and public consultations on social partner agreements, but emphasised that the political will to put into question the role of social partners and their autonomy has existed for quite some time. She also remarks the contradiction that supposes to organise a big event with the aim to strength the social dialogue and in a few days to launch the Regulatory Packet initiative, that in her opinion reduce the social partner capacity and autonomy.

Mr Bailly stressed that while there may be legitimate questions about the implementation of social partner agreements, there should be further reflections on whether asking third parties through a public consultation and impact assessments is an adequate process. He concluded that the SSDC for the postal sector underlines the importance of the social partners as set out in the TFEU and demands respect of their autonomy. At this regards, the committee agreed on the adoption of the following statement:

*“The European Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector carefully considered the cross-industry European social partners joint letter addressed to the Commission. This letter expresses their concerns about the fact that European social partners’ agreements, under article 155 paragraph 2 of the EU treaty, i.e. for which social partners request an implementation by Council decision, should be subject to public stakeholder consultation procedures and impact assessment.*

*In this context, the Committee wants to underline the importance of respecting the autonomy of European social partners according to the Treaty.*

*The European Social Dialogue Committee for the postal sector support the points made in the joint letter, namely;*

- *Agreements that deal with issues pertaining to social partner competences that are signed by representative organisations must be respected;*
- *Social partner agreements should not be subject to public stakeholder consultation: Such a consultation process is highly inappropriate as it would risk undermining the delicate balance of the negotiated outcomes;*
- *Any analysis by the Commission or Council should not interfere with the dynamics of the negotiations. The full involvement of social partners in any such process is necessary to ensure that social partners’ views as negotiators are taken into account.”*

#### **4. SDC main orientations**



SDC draft working  
programme 2015-201

Mr Bailly and Mr Scott recalled the importance of participating in the working groups in order to revitalise the SSDC, taking into account technical and political innovations. To do so, there is a need to better align the working groups’ membership and activities with key issues for the sector. It is important to further take into consideration Commission’s initiatives with potential social impact and new diversification activities. For this purpose, it has been decided to launch in the upcoming weeks a two-fold consultation: call for candidates for the working groups’ membership and consultation on main topics of interest.

#### **5. Postal Sector Evolution (PSE) working group activities**

Ms Margaux Meidinger (POSTEUROP) explained the activity plan of the working group on PSE, which will focus on the project and its two topics: 1) collective labour agreements to accompany the change process at national level and social transformation strategies, having as objective the identification of the key topics dealt with at national level and better understand the process of social dialogue; 2) learning seminar on new services (digital services, e-commerce, new services of proximity), that will provide social partners with a better understanding of these new markets, thanks to the training material prepared by the consultant, and with a particular attention given to the new competences required and the role of training.



Draft presentation  
PSE project plenary 0

## 6. Training working groups activities

Mr Scott presented the activities of the training working group. The Training Working Group programme for 2015 will be focused mainly on the learning seminar and will support the activity to be undertaken to identify new developments as a result of e commerce, digitalisation and other innovations in the postal sector. The work will be supported by the consultant through desk research, external experts and the experience and knowledge of representatives from postal companies and trade unions. Mr Scott said that the main objectives of the training working groups are: engage with all 28 member states at the training seminar; to identify the key training aspects of new services in the following areas (digital services, parcels activity, e-commerce value chain, new competencies required, new job opportunities, redeployment); to ensure that experts are available to share knowledge on new services and trends that will be important in the sector in the upcoming years.



Draft SDC Training  
WG plenary meeting I

## 7. CSR/Health and Safety working groups activities

Ms Heike Ausprung (POSTEUROP) presented the results of the "Demographic change project" and its main outcomes, the Joint declaration on demographic change, which points out the main generation management activities in the postal sector: well-being and health at work policies related to the physical, but also psychosocial work environment; knowledge management, succession planning, training measures; and assessment of the financial impacts of the ageing workforce. Furthermore, Ms Ausprung focused on the management activities that should be taken up in the postal sector in order to prevent or better deal with demographic change of the workforce: knowledge transfer and intergenerational management, including coaching and tutoring schemes; flexible working solutions largely focusing on temporal flexibility; age positive recruitment, development policies and awareness building initiatives.



Presentation  
CSR\_HS\_05\_05\_15\_c

Ms Mir Roca intervened to underline the impact of demographic change on both workers and customers; in this sense, it is crucial to update the method and the procedures of employees' recruitment and to implement the mechanism of transfer of competences among workers.

Mr Bailly stressed that the joint declaration on demographic change is almost finalised and will be signed soon.

## 8. A.O.B.

Mr Bailly and Ms Meidinger reminded to the committee the study on the representativeness of social partners in the postal sector carried out by Eurofound.

As Mr Schwarz will be leaving his current post, Mr Bailly and Mr Scott thanked him for the excellent commitment shown during these years to the postal services SSDC.

## Participants

POSTEUROPE			UNI Europa Postal		
Ms Abola-Laedane	Marta	LV	Mr Berta	Gyula	HU
Ms Ausprung	Heike	DE	Ms Kangur	Kadri	EE
Mr Bailly	Dominique	FR	Mr Kortas	Marinos	CY
Ms Bermingham	Elaine	IE	Ms Meynard	Alexandra	FR
Ms Fairhurst	Jane	UK	Ms Mir Roca	Montserrat	ES
Ms Ganzel	Nathalie	FR	Mr Raposo	Enrique	ES
Ms Gruzauskiene	Viktorija	LT	Mr Scott	Brian	UK
Mr Heiliö	Anssi	FI	Mr Sivertsen	Havard	NO
Mr Henry	Jan Bart	NL	Mr Theodorakis	Dimitris	EU
Ms Meidinger	Margaux	FR			
Mr Müller	Edgar	AT			
Ms Renard	Agathe	FR			
Ms Richardson	Annie	UK			
Mr Sanz	Francisco	ES			
Mr Wullink	Victor	NL			

employers: 15, trade union: 9

women: 12, men: 12

from new Member States: 5, from old Member States: 17, from EU-level organisations: 1, non-EU: 1

European Commission, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Public Interest Services (Unit D3): Mr Werner Stengg, Ms Camilla Olivius

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, Social Dialogue, Industrial Relations (Unit B1): Mr Guido Schwarz, Mr Leonardo Ebner