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International confederation for printing and allied industries a.i.s.b.l.



Social Dialogue Committee for the Graphical Sector

Work Programme 2013 - 2015

Introduction

The European social partners of the graphical industry have had regular meetings and exchanges of information and have cooperated during the past in various EU projects. However, in the past two years this cooperation was intensified within the framework of a joint project on Socially Responsible Restructuring.

The project has shown the possibilities and confirmed the importance of a need for closer cooperation at European level in order to jointly face the challenges the sector is undergoing. A commitment to deepen cooperation and to enter a formal social dialogue was confirmed by the General Assemblies of both organisations in 2011. A preparatory project was subsequently launched in 2012 in order to discuss and identify the possible topics and the way of working, as well as formulating the official application to the European Commission.

The European sectoral dialogue of the graphical industry will tackle subjects of importance to the sector as a whole, but will not interfere with the autonomy of the national social partners in determining terms and conditions of employment in their national contexts.

This bi-annual work programme serves as a guideline for the activities of the European social partners for the years 2013 to 2015.

Background

The graphical industry is part of the wider manufacturing sector that focuses in particular upon the reproduction of communication material. Its products range from newspapers, books, periodicals, business forms, greeting cards, identification documents and other materials. The printing activity relies on associated support activities, such as bookbinding and plate-making services. Processes used in printing include transferring data from a plate, screen or computer file to a medium, such as paper, plastics, metal. The most prominent printing techniques range from offset, gravure, screen to flexographic printing. More recently printing companies have made a significant move towards integrating digital printing into their activities, opening their market to new features such as personalisation of print, short run or "on demand" printing, and web to print services. In recent years printing companies have also enlarged their scope of activities to include the integration of value added services, such as database management for clients and the production of e-documents or websites.

The graphical industry in the EU comprises some 120,000 companies employing 710,000 people in 2009, and generates a turnover of some 88 billion Euros (2009).

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The industry is dominated by small and medium sized enterprises with 95% employing not more than 20 people in Europe.

The graphical sector is increasingly affected by the growth of electronic media, imports from low cost countries, structural overcapacity, and concentration at the level of paper and ink suppliers. This requires significant restructuring or adjustments in the offer of companies, adaptation in available skills, in a general context of pressure based not only on low margins, but also increasingly on environmental considerations. The image of print products is suffering. They are not only seen as traditional, but the fact that print products are paper-based leads to environmental considerations from consumers that are in fact at odds with reality. Print is not seen as a renewable recyclable resource, but as a forest destroying environmentally questionable product.

Furthermore the graphical industry has been severely hit by the economic crisis and is not recovering, with turnover not expected to increase to pre-crisis levels in European countries.

Work programme

For the years 2013 to 2015, the social dialogue committee of the graphical sector will address the following issues.

1. The technological, social and economic situation and trends of the sector at EU level

The graphical sector is in a rapid and on-going state of change and evolution, and as such it is important for Intergraf, UNI Europa Graphical and their respective members, to have a complete picture of the technological, social and economic realities of the European graphical sector in its entirety. Such an overview must be informed through an accurate picture of the situation of the sector at national level, and it is crucial that the social partners at national and European levels are regularly updated on the situation of the European graphical sector if we are to improve our ability to anticipate change and develop a clearer vision on the possibilities for future developments in the graphical industry.

In order to improve understanding and raise awareness of the situation in the European graphical industry, Intergraf and UNI Europa Graphical will use their social dialogue meetings at European level to organise regular exchanges of information on the situation in the graphical industry and discussions on the current and future trends of the sector. These exchanges of information will be organised on the basis of presentations and discussions of national reports. Expert opinions from research institutes or other bodies will be requested when necessary.

In addition, Intergraf and UNI Europa Graphical will prepare within their social dialogue meetings the terms of reference of a study aimed at exploring different

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possible scenarios for the future of the communication industry as a whole and the possibilities for the development of graphical companies within it.

Depending upon the discussions that take place within the social dialogue, Intergraf and UNI Europa will decide on the best form that follow-up work should take. Different possibilities can be envisaged, such as dissemination of the information, preparation of publications and reports, joint opinions/declarations, conferences, around specific themes, etc.

2. Follow-up of the 2010 joint EU project on “Best practices in socially responsible restructuring of printing companies”

Both organisations will continue to promote the use of the documents developed during the 2010 project and make them available to all stakeholders. Further dissemination and workshops in different countries are envisaged and will be supported by UNI Europa Graphical and Intergraf.

Intergraf and UNI Europa Graphical will evaluate all the activities organised in relation to these subjects, and, depending upon the results of the evaluation may:

- update and review the materials developed within the framework of the 2010 project;
- develop other tools or actions to support social partners of the industry at all levels in dealing with restructuring in a socially responsible manner.

3. Development of skills

It is crucial for the sector's social partners to analyze the current and future needs for skills in the sector. From this analysis, strategic plans will be prepared in order to ensure, on the one hand, the graphical companies have and will have the necessary skills and, secondly, the present and future graphical workers go through long life learning processes allowing them to adapt to technological and organizational developments of the sector.

The social partners will closely monitor the development of skills needs of the sector in order to anticipate changes in skills requirements, and will discuss the education and training needs and exchange best practices. Experts will include EGIN (the European Graphic Industry Network focussing on training and vocational education in the graphical industry) as well as the International Circle (a cooperation of universities for higher education in the graphical industry).

Discussions on skills needs will cover the entire spectrum of current traditional printing activities as well as new services increasingly offered by printers, ranging from database management up to the creation of electronic documents, websites, interactive links between print and electronic media, etc. Challenges are particularly seen for the industry in the consumer behaviour with the move from paper to a digital information medium. This has major effects on advertising and requires a greater flexibility in the delivery of information from the side of the publisher and the print

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buyer in business to business operations.

In a first step, Intergraf and UNI Europa Graphical will organise an open and structured exchange of information on the evolution of skills in the graphical industry. National and European experts, institutes, and researchers, etc., will be invited to feed into these discussions and exchanges of information. In a second step, Intergraf and UNI Europa will, based on the exchanges of information, draw out joint analysis and conclusions. Building on the joint analysis, the European social partners of the graphical industry will then propose a structure for continuing the work on the skills needs of the graphical industry, for example through the launching of a study on future skills needs and the setting up of a sector council on employment and skills, as suggested by the Commission in the context of its New Skills for New Jobs initiative.

Adopted in December 2012

Signatures:

(Signature)
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Havard Grijtoheim'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Havard Grijtoheim
Intergraf
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Dubbins'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Simon Dubbins
UNI Europa Graphical
President