



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

Social Dialogue, Social Rights, Working Conditions, Adaptation to Change
Social Dialogue, Industrial Relations

Steel Social Dialogue Committee

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I.

Working Group on Structural Change in the European Steel Industry

The meeting discussed the following items:

Presentation by Syndex of the study “Climate Change and Employment – The case of the Steel Industry”. This study states that employment in the European steel industry will go down further (increasing cost pressure and outsourcing) and a certain movement of de-localization is unavoidable, but the EU cap-and-trade regime could accelerate these structural evolutions.

It mainly concludes that a combination of intensifying R&D and investment efforts significantly reducing CO₂ emissions and measures addressing the competitive handicap for EU steel industry in the face of imports from non-EU steel facilities not subject to similar carbon constraints, would however reduce the risk of job losses in the EU steel industry estimated at up to 50 000, compared with the risk of losses up to 80 000 in a “business as usual” scenario. In the discussion following the presentation, EU steel industry questioned some of the elements put forward by Syndex, notably:

- Reference to EU steel having earned money during the first years of EU ETS creates a bad image to our sector.
- The reference to the short-term potential of CO₂ emission reduction between 34 to 52% is not realistic. Such statement risks encouraging the Commission to impose additional caps on our sector.
- Reflections on border-adjustment measures should also consider the export interests of EU steel companies.

Presentation by Eurofer on EMF’s analysis and proposals on how Sectoral Social Dialogue can deal with structural changes in the EU steel industry. Eurofer concurs with the factors characterizing the process of structural change in the European steel industry identified in the EMF analysis (consolidation and globalization, global steel demand driven by emerging economies, increasing asymmetric cost burden on EU steel producers resulting from raw material cost increases and environmental policies, demographic challenges, steel industry remaining cyclical business).

It expressed interest in identifying existing and potential Community financial resources for management of change, exploring the potential of monitoring main trends in the EU steel industry (in cooperation with the European monitoring Center for Change – EMCC)

and developing joint presence and position taking within the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCIC) of the European Economic and Social Committee.

On the basis of the two above mentioned presentations, Eurofer and EMF agreed as follows:

- To participate jointly in the stakeholder consultation on the Commission's Communication on the Competitiveness of Metals Industries.
- To assess the potential of a sector-related initiative (such as CAR21) for the steel industry to provide the stakeholders with an appropriate forum to discuss the main challenges facing our industry (involving ESTEP)

II.

Working Group on Health and Safety

The meeting discussed the following items:

Referring to the last meeting of the WG (23.11.07), Eurofer presented its general approach on how to develop views and actions related to Health and Safety (H&S) at a European level (see slide 3 of the Eurofer presentation in enclosure 3).

In addition, several general presentations were given:

Presentation by the European Commission (Dr. Francisco Alvarez) on the Community Strategy 2007-2012 on Health and Safety at work, focusing on the European challenges and objectives including the ambition of reducing the rate of accidents at work by 25% by 2012. The Commission explained the process in which it was advancing step by step in developing its data collection. It acknowledged that statistics would need to become more precise.

The following items were then debated:

- The difficulty of information and internal prevention typical in small and medium size enterprises (also part of the bigger EU steel groups downstream).
- The aim and objectives of the European Social Fund in H&S at work in Member States.
- The need to have basic statistics on a European level, but difficulty of lack of homogeneous definitions on factors such as occupational diseases.
- Presentation by IISI (Ms. Vicky Kilgour) on current initiatives and developments on H&S within the international steel community, focusing on H&S principles and company good practices. Interestingly, IISI holds a voluntary safety metrics survey yearly (participation by 41 companies including 6 of the top 10 steel producers, of which 12 European companies).
- Presentation by Nathalie Darge (Eurofer) on a draft of a Eurofer matrix on Health and Safety at work (best practices).

On the basis of the three above mentioned presentations, Eurofer and EMF agreed as follows:

- Need to collect statistics on H&S at a European level through Eurofer, while keeping it basic and manageable. Eurofer will check with IISI the input this international organization already receives from Eurofer members, as well as the availability of such statistics within the European institutions (sectoral data available within Eurostat?).
- On best practices, it was agreed to start up a process of selecting actions and methods which could inspire other companies (innovative), to be presented to the WG over the next sessions, which could be disseminated via a website on Social Dialogue. Also, Eurofer checks with IISI what would be available already.
- Need for organized joint working on this topic by both Eurofer and EMF (the latter will dedicate a H&S specialist for this purpose)
- In general, the WG needs a better coordination between EMF and Eurofer and an improved structure and organization (Co-chairmen of both sides)