



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

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

Brussels, 30 October 2014

## **Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Telecommunications**

### **Plenary Meeting on 22 September 2014**

#### **Concise draft minutes**

*The meeting was chaired by Mr Lindhardt (worker side).*

#### **1. Welcome and introduction to the objectives of the meeting. Adoption of the draft agenda and draft minutes of 10 June 2014;**

The draft minutes of the last meeting and the draft agenda were adopted. The presentation of the study on telecommunications and ICT was added on the agenda.

#### **2. Adoption of the 2014-2015 SSSDC work programme;**

#### **3. Study outline: Mapping the structural changes and their impacts on jobs and industrial relations in the telecommunications and ICT sectors – presentation by COWI and exchange of views;**

Mr Shermer (COWI) presented the objectives of the study, which is to map the boundaries, the employment and industrial relations in the rapidly changing telecommunications and ICT sectors. The consultant outlined the study's methodology, notably the study questions to be addressed through a mix of stakeholders' interviews and desk research. Further information was also given on various possibilities to define the demarcation of the sectors and the considerations implied. Mr Shermer specified that the study will look in detail into 5 multinational companies and 8 countries representative of different clusters in terms of industrial relations in the sectors.

In the follow-up discussion, Ms Delacotte (ETNO) asked to clarify the purpose of the study and Mr Steeg (employers, DE) pointed to the need of being more rigorous on the issue of the sectors' definition. Ms Winiarska (DG EMPL) clarified that the clarification of the definition is one of the study's objectives and as such will be part of its conclusions. The comments from the workers' side (FR, ES, PT) generally welcomed the study and highlighted the difficulty in defining the blurry areas in-between the sectors, which also make the work difficult for some trade unions' organizations. Mr Varela (workers, ES) stressed the need of balancing the views of workers and employers throughout the study and pointed to increasing convergence between the provision of services and content in the telecommunications. Mr Hofmeister (workers, AT) noted the influence of outsourcing and sub-contracting on the industrial relations in the sector. Mr Tate (UNI Global ICTs) asked to include Eriksson in the study as an important representative of manufacturing companies.

#### **4. Signature of the joint declaration on gender equality;**

The joint declaration<sup>1</sup> was officially signed by Mr Pataki on behalf of employers and Mr Lindhardt on behalf of workers.

#### **5. Evolution of the working conditions in call centers (telemarketing) - presentation by UNI Europa (Carlos Prieto) and follow-up discussion;**

Mr Prieto (UGT, ES) gave an overview of the structural situation in the call centre sector in Spain, which is dominated by women and progressively ageing workforce. The speaker noted that compared to 10 years ago, the work organization changed and the number of breaks was reduce as the workers are no longer required to fill out the call reports. It was noted that the sector features average salary at the level of 50% of the national minimum salary and is exposed to strong delocalization to Latin America (Spanish-speaking countries). Among the problems in the sector, Mr Prieto noted decreasing profitability, psycho-social risks, difficult conditions of work, including office space and number of "pirate operators", which do not respect the conditions of collective agreements. He noted that this is a sector, which is sensitive primarily to the price conditions and not to the quality of service or image of the company.

In the following exchange of views, Mr Tate pointed to the standardized operation methods of the call centres everywhere in the world (linked to the fact that the market is dominated by a few groups) and the price pressure on this type of companies. He also stressed that the in-house contact centres report, generally speaking, better working conditions and that the difference is made with collective bargaining, where unionization rates are sufficient. Ms Delacotte informed that Orange assures same conditions for the employees of both sub-contracted and in-house call centres. The German unions pointed to decreasing motivation of staff due to conditions of work, the Portuguese unions mentioned the problems with using the temporary agency work. The social partners discussed also about the trade-off on ensuring productivity and the job-strain linked to excessive control of the workers. The Commission pointed to the need of finding sector-specific solutions to ensure socially responsible conditions of out-sourcing.

#### **6. Telefonica's approach to teleworking/flexible working in the UK - presentation by ETNO (Paul Mrozowski) and follow-up discussion;**

Mr Mrozowski (Telefonica UK) presented the social partners with different examples of flexibility in terms of work organization (time-wise and physical location) available for employees of the group. He presented the advantages for workers and the company leading to a high success rate of the scheme.

In the follow-up exchange, Mr Prieto proposed for the social partners to elaborate minimum standards for the industry based on the 2002 cross-industry Telework Agreement<sup>2</sup>. Mr Tate pointed to the issue of workers' availability 24/7 and Ms Iglesias-Palma (CCOD ES) highlighted the isolation factor, which can be also cultural.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=521&langId=en&agreementId=5372>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.etuc.org/framework-agreement-telework>

## **7. Point of information from the secretariats: state of play of the FITS project;**

Mr Delacotte informed the participants about the finalization of the work on the project and the upcoming final conference in Brussels scheduled for 28 November. Ms Dedden clarified that the number of reimbursements for participation in the final conference will have to be limited. Both ETNO and UNI agreed that the study's results should feed into the Commission's study on telecommunications and ICT.

## **8. AOB.**

The Commission informed the social partners about the upcoming Liaison Forums on 27 October and 1 December (postponed to 3 December).

### *Participants 22.09.2014*

#### **Employers (3 ♂, 3 ♀)**

Ms Delacotte (ETNO / Orange France)

Mr Pataki (ETNO)

Ms Mazoyer (ETNO)

Mr Steeg (Deutsche Telecom)

Mr Mrozowski (Telefonica UK)

Ms Vicente (Portugal Telecom)

#### **European Commission**

Ms Winiarska (DG EMPL)

#### **External speaker**

Mr Shermer (COWI)

#### **Workers (12 ♂, 3 ♀)**

Mr Batista (PT)

Mr Bäckström (SE)

Ms Dedden (UNI Europa)

Mr Goncalves (PT)

Mr Heikkila (FI)

Mr Hofmeister (AT)

Ms Iglesias-Palma (ES)

Mr Iwaszkiewicz (PL)

Ms Kaugurs (EE)

Mr Lindhart (DK)

Mr Mickiewicz (PL)

Mr Prieto (ES)

Mr Solhaug (Norway)

Mr Tate (UNI Global)

Mr Verderio (IT)