



**Social Dialogue Hospital Sector
Brussels,
1 July 2011
Minutes**

Participants List

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MORNING SESSION - Chair Mr Godfrey Perera, Secretary General, HOSPEEM

The chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. Item 1 on the agenda (*Final exchange on and adoption of HOSPEEM-EPSU Work Programme 2011-2013*) was postponed to the afternoon session. The agenda was approved by the plenary.

1. Recognition of professional qualifications

The Chair informed members that the European Commission published a green paper on 22nd June 2011, on modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive. He stated that he was in favour of a joint HOSPEEM-EPSU response which would give a strong message. He also said that it was necessary to have a discussion about a possible joint reply during the plenary, as the deadline for the response was on 20th September 2011.

Ms Ling and Mr Maucher gave an update to the plenary on the main points of the joint reply prepared by HOSPEEM and EPSU on March 2011. They made the following comments on the Green Paper issued by the European Commission.

Positive side:

- Introduction of an alert system to share information about dangerous health professionals;
- Strengthen the IMI (Internal Market Information System) system which is already in place.

Problematic issues/open questions:

- the European Commission is keen to undertake the introduction of the European Professional card, but the European Social Partners expressed their concerns about the possible cost/benefits it could imply;
- European Commission in favour of a partial access;
- The proposal of the European Commission on how to solve the question of language requirements is still not clear.

Mr Maucher said that was important to look at some specific issues for the joint reply: partial access, language skills and professional card. The latter is a key point for the European Commission.

The working document published by the European Parliament on 24 June 2011 is more cautious with regard to the European professional card. The document published by the European Parliament reflects to a large extent the comments made by the European Social Partners in their joint reply.

Ms Neuhauser informed the group that DG MARKT was organising a public Conference on the Modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive on the 7th November 2011 in order to give feedback about the reactions to the Green paper.

Mr Maucher proposed to set up a meeting between the HOSPEEM and EPSU secretariats and the rapporteur McClarkin.

Ms Benassi updated the plenary on the contacts between Ms McClarkin and HOSPEEM secretariat. The secretariat had not received a reply to the email sent to the MEP's office with the request for an update on the discussion within the IMCO (Internal Market and Consumer Protection) committee on recognition of professional qualification.

Ms Ling highlighted that the European Parliament needs to approve the Directive by April 2012, therefore the time scale is tight.

It was decided that HOSPEEM and EPSU will endeavour drafting a joint reply under the consultation on the Green Paper on the Modernisation of the Recognition of Professional Qualifications. The draft reply will be based on input from our members respectively and comprise the issues with broad consensus. It will be circulated after 1 September 2011 for consultation and comments by EPSU affiliates and HOSPEEM members, deadline 15 September. This timing will also, allow for a discussion of the draft reply in the working group meeting of 16 September 2011. EPSU affiliates are requested to send their contributions by 22 August, the same holds for HOSPEEM members.

2. Ageing health care workforce

The Chair underlined this was an important issue for the healthcare sector. Hospitals in Europe are facing severe shortages of staff and according to the data of the European Commission in the future the situation would become even more serious. Several institutional bodies are looking into this problem (e.g. DG SANCO), therefore it is important to avoid any duplication and try to undertake a constructive joint work to address this issue.

Mr Lindberg underlined that a previous HOSPEEM-EPSU working group existed since the creation of the two organisations. It was temporarily put aside because of the sharp negotiations.

HOSPEEM members discussed the kind of tool necessary and they concluded that the best way forward would be to negotiate a set of recommendations or guidelines. This was the best way to go forward in order to address the different situations faced by the 27 Member States. Mr Lindberg said that among other, some elements that could be considered are the current reforms in the national pension systems and the request for people to work longer. Furthermore, it would be interesting to connect our activities with the events that will be organised by the European Commission for the European year of Active Ageing in 2012.

The Chair said that HOSPEEM secretariat will take care of the organisation of HOSPEEM working group. The candidature for the participation to the working group will be collected after the meeting.

Ms Adams underlined how the ageing workforce is an issue of great importance for each EU Member State and suggested to insert a set of good practices in the instrument in order to provide national Member States with examples to share. She also stated that was important to take into account also other elements like the question of well-being at work, which is closely connected with the issue of ageing workforce, and the way the transition of jobs for an aged workforce can be managed.

Ms Fischbach-Pyttel underlined that it is essential to connect ageing and recruitment. It is not possible to undertake successful policies on the ageing workforce issues without attracting young people into the sector. The solution cannot be simply working longer, in particular given the physical and psychological demanding work by health professionals. Ms Fischbach-Pyttel said that was necessary to look the work already done by the social partners, especially in the booklet commissioned in 2006 by HOSPEEM and EPSU. That study contains concrete point that can be useful for the next steps of the joint work.

Mr Maucher requested a written outline about the ageing health care workforce issue defining objectives, main contents and type of instrument HOSPEEM is aiming for.

HOSPEEM agreed to send EPSU a letter before the summer break. EPSU will respond to HOSPEEM proposal.

The plenary agreed to focus the social dialogue working group meetings on 16th September and 26th October mainly on the issue of ageing workforce.

The Chair reminded the plenary that each side will have 15 reimbursed seats for the working group meeting.

AFTERNOON SESSION - Chair Lisa di Paolo Sandberg, President EPSU Standing Committee Health and Social Services

3. Final exchange on and adoption of HOSPEEM-EPSU Work Programme 2011-2013

The Chair introduced the discussion held between the members of the steering committee on the work programme. HOSPEEM had some amendments to make to the work programme.

Ms Neuhauser underlined the importance of the issue ageing workforce for HOSPEEM members and she said that it was considered the main priority for the upcoming months.

Ms Neuhauser presented the proposals for amendment made by HOSPEEM members and approved by the steering committee (see revised work programme).

EPSU members approved the changes. The work programme 2011-2013 was adopted by the plenary.

4. EPSU-HOSPEEM Code of Conduct on Ethical Cross-border Recruitment and Retention

Ms Merlijn and Mr de Wilde and Mr Alkema made a presentation about the implementation of the code of conduct in the Netherlands.

Mr Maucher said that it will be necessary to prepare a report on the implementation of the code by the beginning of 2012. EPSU and HOSPEEM secretariats are preparing a template that would be useful for reporting back the progress made in every country on the implementation of the code of conduct. The members agreed to look into the template produced by the Dutch trade unions and employers, for inspiration and to identify key elements for the template/questionnaire to be used to report by to the HOSPEEM and EPSU Secretariat.

HOSPEEM and EPSU agreed that it was important to make this code known to the European Institutions, in particular DG SANCO, who is promoting the WHO code very actively, without mentioning the existence of the EPSU-HOSPEEM code of conduct. The plenary remarked that the two codes of conduct/practice were not in competition and they can well coexist as they have many points in common.

5. Strengthening Social Dialogue in the Baltic States

Ms Weber, expert from GHK who was responsible for the research for the project, presented the findings of her study.

Mr Kalejs, as representative of one of the hosting countries, gave his impressions about the project and the benefits it brought in terms of visibility of the Baltic Social Partners. In particular he stressed the importance of the Riga declaration.

Mr Perera said that the declaration highlights the urgency to put in place policies that help to retain staff in those countries. The Riga declaration underlines the important the role of

the social partners to shape work force and healthcare policies. It also stresses the importance of Government working together with the social partners in order to deal with the problems facing the health sector in the Baltic States. This conference should be considered a starting point that paves the way to strengthening industrial relations in the Baltic States in the hospital sector and to make the voice of social partners heard by Governments in those countries.

Mr Ziegler, from the European Commission, stated how pleased was with the outcome of the project and final conference in Riga in May which he attended.

6. Prevention of Sharps Injuries

Mr Maucher and Mr Perera informed the plenary about their visit to EU-OSHA in Bilbao, 11 May 2011 and the meeting with Dr Takala. They also reported back from 2nd European Biosafety Summit in Dublin, 1 June 2011, and a meeting at the Aesculap Academy. Mr Perera said that the Aesculap Academy is making contact with the various interested partners to see whether it was possible to come up with joint guidance on the implementation of Directive 2010/32/EU to be used locally. In particular, the Aesculap Academy is in the process of organising a follow-up workshop in Berlin between October and November 2011.

(Minutes drafted by HOSPEEM Secretariat and revised and approved by EPSU Secretariat)