



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

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

SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE FOR WOODWORKING

28 May 2013
Plenary meeting
MINUTES

Chair : Philip BUISSERET and Frederik LAUWAERT (CEI-Bois)

1. Opening of the meeting

Mr BUISSERET welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of the agenda and of draft minutes of the Plenary Meeting dd.

21/11/2012

The agenda of the meeting was adopted, after having added a presentation by Jackie BAZELEY on sector skills councils, as well as a discussion on the 2013 work programme. The timing of the agenda points would be dealt with in a flexible way. The minutes of the previous plenary meeting were adopted.

3. Contacts with OSHA

Brenda O'BRIEN (OSHA liaison officer) came to present OSHA's upcoming Health & Safety campaign. The present campaign on risk prevention, with better involvement of workers and commitment of management, will result in an event on benchmarking early June. The Agency also organised its good practice award ceremony on H&S with a number of winning companies from all over the EU. The next event will be the summit in Bilbao in the 2nd week in November.

The upcoming 2014 campaign will be dedicated to stress and psycho-social risks in EU workplaces. It is the result of research on absenteeism and indicating the economic cost of stress. The campaign will deal with ways of managing stress, risk assessment and the experience of stress. Consequently, the next campaign will provide hands-on assistance in identifying stress and its causes, in order to find solutions. Therefore, toolkits are being developed. She invited the social partners to become recognised European partners. The campaign will be launched in April 2014, but information material will become available as of January.

The Agency also has an ongoing pilot project on older workers, running over a period of 2 years. The subject was also discussed in the Social Investment Package. An important issue is the H&S aspect, more in particular the fact that a high number of workers do not reach retirement age. It has also been noticed that young workers are more often sick, while older workers are on sick leave for longer time-spans. Consequently, it needs to be studied whether and how work places can be adapted, in order to address the huge economic cost and to allow longer working. The Agency is therefore looking for sectoral info, although the actual project is intended to have a holistic approach, starting from education.

Finally, Ms O'BRIEN informed the participants that the Agency's 2013 Work Programme was approved, which includes issues on nanotechnology, green jobs, etc...

Coming back to the pilot project on older workers, CEI-Bois announced the social partners' demographic project which is expected to be presented for the next call for

proposals. The project will deal with the image and attractiveness of the sector, while at the same time focus on keeping experience in the companies. Rolf GEHRING also confirmed that demographic change is on the agenda of the social dialogue committee, and stressed the importance thereof. Referring to OSHA's current campaign, Mr GEHRING mentioned the Wood Dust project and strongly suggested to make the results available to OSHA for further dissemination; Ms O'BRIEN agreed with this proposal. Finally, Mr ASTIER stressed the importance of prevention measures in this context, and recalled the two common statements by the European social partners in this field.

4. 2013 Work Programme.

Frederik LAUWAERT introduced the 2013 work programme which is based on the 2011 and 2012 versions and which is built around 4 themes : industrial policy, training and education, health and safety, and demographic change. Mr VAN DER VEER reacted in the name of the workers' side by stating that the draft 2013 work programme showed a number of deletions and changes made without prior consultation. Together with Mr GEHRING, he mentioned the following subjects, deemed to be necessary in the work programme : follow-up of sector skills in the furniture sector, standardisation and wood dust policy influencing, quality of traineeships, competitiveness based on EESC opinion, and follow-up of the 2010 roadmap. Mr LAUWAERT agreed to include the items mentioned in the work programme and proposed therefore to finalise the proposed draft work programme at secretariat level within two weeks.

5. Wood dust and standardisation.

Mr Stefano BOY (senior researcher ETUI) made a presentation on woodworking machinery and the related health risks closely linked to the presence of extracting systems, or to avoidance of dust at the source. New machinery is manufactured with respect of the standards included in a Directive interpreted by CEN (European Committee for Standardisation). These standards are prepared by Technical Committee N° 142 at EU level, consisting of Delegates of each Member State from the machinery production sector. The possible role of the social partners herein can be twofold : either at EU or at national level. He asked the employers – who buy the machinery – to become more involved in the Technical Committee by making recommendations to their national representatives and by connecting to ETUI. He proposed to bring the social partners in contact with their national stakeholders, and finally pointed at the win-win situation for workers and employers.

Mr BOY's initiative was praised by Messrs ASTIER and GEHRING. Mr LAUWAERT proposed to ask the liaison status for both EU social partners in the Technical Committee N° 142, to which Mr BOY agreed.

6. Sector Skills Councils.

Ms Jackie BAZELEY gave a presentation on the activity of the furniture sector in the field of sector skills councils ("EFSSC Feasibility Study", attached). Mr WALL (DG ENTR) made reference to a survey by DG ENTR a number of years ago, and expressed his interest in the similarities between different national education systems and the possible transferability thereof, as confirmed by Ms BAZELEY.

Mr GEHRING made reference to the "foster VET mobility" project of the sector, which showed that the structure of national training systems is often difficult to compare. He also referred to the "Bolster up" project, focussing on the professions of cabinet maker and upholsterer and the respective national curricula.

On the possibility of creating a sector skills council for the furniture industry he reported on a meeting with the Head of Unit EMPL.C.3 on the subject of the EU skills panorama and a sector skills council project for the construction sector. During that meeting, both social partners doubted the feasibility of the skills panorama, because for assessing future needs – which is the objective of the system – a wider range of data is needed than those related to skills only. Therefore, both the construction and the furniture sector opted not to ask the Commission for funding to support their activities in this field, also because the Commission does not consider it to be an objective of the sector skills councils to provide networking activities, but rather to act as data providers.

7. Update on the activities of the WG "VET"

Mr GEHRING reported on the three main issues dealt by this working group : sector skills councils, the "Bolster up" project, and the Staff Working Document and Commission Communication on Traineeships. More details can be found in the minutes of the meeting dd. 18 March 2013.

8. Update on the activities of the WG "OSH"

Mr GEHRING reported on the issues hereunder :

- a)** For the "Less Dust" project two successful workshops were held in Vilnius and Warsaw respectively. Upcoming workshops are held in Sofia and Italy.
- b)** On Formaldehyde, where the focus is on prevention, the European Panel Federation (EPF) and CEI-Bois want to launch a second project to evaluate the results of the previous, whilst EFBWW does not see the need for a second project, but proposes to develop the results of the 1st project in terms of legal aspects.
- c)** On the Carcinogens Directive, a decision of the ACHS was issued on 5 December 2012, which included a decision on limit values for wood dust going down from 5 to 3 mg per cubic metre of air in the workplace. The employee side, however, had proposed 2 mg. Also a decision on limit values for hard wood dust was taken, which is expected to remain the case in future. The time-frame for a decision is unclear at present, but it may result in a consultation of stakeholders (including social partners) still this year. To this, Mr WALL added that an informal information meeting would be held by DG ENTR on 10 June on formaldehyde in products.

9. AOB

- a) The Committee wished to thank Mr Flemming ANDERSEN for his participation in the SSDC for the Woodworking Industry since the start of social dialogue in this field.
- b) Dates of next meetings : 26 September (working group) and 13 November 2013 (working group with interpretation).

Annexes :

- List of participants

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<p><u>Employers</u></p> <p>CEI-Bois Mr Philip BUISSERET (EU) Mr Frederik LAUWAERT (EU) Mr Anders CANEMYR (SE) Mr Michel ASTIER (F) Ms Aline D'HULST (BE) Mr Michael EIRUP (DK) Mr Olivier GOULART (F)</p> <p>7 employers representatives (1 woman, 6 men) (2 EU, 5 old MS)</p>	<p><u>Workers</u></p> <p>EFBWW Mr Sam HÅGGLUND (EU) Mr Rolf GEHRING (EU) Mr William VAN DER STRAETEN (EU) Mr Flemming ANDERSEN (DK) Ms Sidse BUCH (DK) Mr John CAMPBELL (DE) Mr Hans DAUGAARD (DK) Mr Wilfried HARTMANN (DE) Mr Kenneth JOHANSSON (SE) Mr Ole-Kristian PAULSEN (NO) Mr Coen VAN DER VEER (NL) Mr John VILLADSEN (DK)</p> <p>12 workers representatives (1 woman, 11 men) (3 EU, 8 old MS, 1 TC)</p>
<p><u>Other participants</u> Ms Brenda O'BRIEN (OSHA) Ms Jackie BAZELEY (BFM Ltd) Mr Stefano BOY (ETUI)</p>	
<p><u>European Commission</u> Mr Jeremy WALL (DG ENTR.) Mr Danny SCHEERLINCK (EMPL.B.1)</p>	