



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG

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

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Postal Services Working group meeting on 15 February 2010, Brussels Training and CSR Minutes

1. Training working group

The meeting was chaired by Mr Costa (POSTEUROP), who gave a presentation on the 2009 activities of the working group and the 2010 work programme.



Training wg 15
February 2010.ppt

Mr Costa pointed out that there has been no news from the Commission on the planned sector councils for employment and skills, which was confirmed by Mr Scott (UNI europa). Still, Mr Scott emphasized the need to move forward with the work programme, as the postal sector is changing due to liberalisation and economic change. He suggested that the issue of green jobs should be dealt with in the framework of the CSR working group, and that a grant application for a funded project would probably be submitted in the second half of the year. In terms of the work programme, UNI europa would like to focus on the question of skills identification, including certification and transferability, on age related issues, since older and younger workers face different challenges, and on the involvement of trade unions in skills development.

Mr Costa and Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) asked for clarification on UNI europa's suggestions. Mr Scott clarified that since the results of the questionnaire are available, the normal way to proceed would be through workshops on certification and transferability of skills, with external experts if necessary and possible. On age-related issues, UNI europa is interested in exploring the kind of impact that the changes have had on workers of different ages. This could be tackled through the collection and exchange of best practices and through external expertise. On the issue of trade union involvement in skills development, the suggestion is also to bring in examples in order to start the discussion about the future based on what has taken place in the past. Ms Mir (UNI europa) specified that the aim is to encourage joint decision-making on training programmes, since trade unions should be involved.

Mr Costa replied that POSTEUROP can agree with the proposal to include the issue of certification and transferability within the planned in-depth analysis of key competences, since this would go hand-in-hand to improve employability, and since it could also be linked to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). He pointed out that the topic of age management falls within the area of CSR, so the training working group cannot take this over, although cooperation with the CSR working group on this issue is certainly

possible. POSTEUROP maintained that the topic of green jobs is an interesting one from a training perspective, too, since it is unclear what climate change means for the skills and competences of workers. As the Commission will have a conference on this topic in June, the training working group should contribute to the work of the CSR working group in this respect. Finally, on the question of trade union involvement in skills development, POSTEUROP has no problem, although the questionnaire showed that in some companies there is little dialogue between the social partners, especially in the new Member States.

Mr Costa clarified that the project proposal from the postal sector evolution working group will have priority. Their proposal would include information on restructuring funds that are available from the European Commission. In response to an inquiry from Ms Berger (UNI europa), Mr Costa emphasized that the aim was not just to collect information that is already available on the internet, but rather have a 2-day workshop focusing on specific information for the social dialogue committee, such as the Leonardo programme for supporting training measures. The workshop would include practical case studies of how to apply, and the training working group would be in charge of the part related to training within one single project overall.

Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) pointed out that the postal sector evolution group has had intense discussions and agreed on a project comprised of three components, namely the topic of the European social funds that are available, the monitoring of universal service, and the continuing monitoring of social regulation, including new entrants.

Mr Scott (UNI europa) emphasized that age-related issues should be covered by the skills and training working group and not left to the CSR working group.

Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) agreed that both working groups should cover age-related issues, but that the work on this should start in the CSR working group. She suggested waiting for the questionnaire results before taking the topic up in the training working group. Ms Ausprung also inquired whether UNI europa would reject the analysis of key competences proposed by Mr Costa.

In response, Mr Scott (UNI europa) clarified that the analysis of key skills is not rejected, but that UNI europa's interest was centred on the topic of skills certification. Ms Mir (UNI europa) added that trade union involvement in training was another area where work should continue.

In closing, Mr Costa (POSTEUROP) pointed out that the age related issues would be discussed during the following CSR working group meeting. Mr Costa also confirmed the commitment to send to UNI europa a new training work programme proposal for 2010, taking into account the suggestions coming from the workers. The employers (POSTEUROP) will await an answer on this proposal.

2. CSR working group

The meeting was chaired by Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP), who gave a presentation on the working group's activities, and outlined the two big areas of the 2010 work programme: follow-up on diversity activities, and follow-up on the environmental pillar of CSR.



CSR_Working
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Ms Mir (UNI europa) expressed the trade union side's willingness to take the issue of diversity forward, since this is also a topic for collective bargaining and work on diversity could be challenged in times of crisis. Therefore, the goal is to highlight the positive role of diversity, so that it will be seen as an opportunity rather than a problem. UNI europa also suggested to add a question to the survey regarding the implementation of diversity charters and CSR principles by companies outside their own home market. A further suggestion concerned the possible organisation of a technical seminar to analyze the best practices after the results from the questionnaire have been collected.

POSTEUROP agreed that the suggestions by UNI europa seemed reasonable, and Mr Müller (POSTEUROP) once again highlighted the importance of the age management topic. Ms Ausprung added that the working group would need to consider the format of a technical seminar, and take account of any consequences for the timeline. She then proceeded to present the questionnaire, pointing out that the contributions from UNI europa had yet to be incorporated.



CSR Questionnaire
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References to 2008 will be dropped in order not to confuse those respondents who didn't participate in 2008. Further amendments from UNI europa concern (1) CSR/diversity outside the home country, (2) the role of training, (3) how diversity policies are anchored in the company, (4) how these policies are anchored in top and middle management and at the team and individual level, (5) has a diversity charter been adopted or established and any progress made in this area.

Ms Mir also highlighted the great importance of age related issues for UNI europa, since the average age at incumbent operators is 45, and discrimination must be avoided. Such discrimination could show itself, for instance, by denying older workers training opportunities. In addition, UNI europa suggested to add a question on the effects of the crisis on such training opportunities, and a question on targeted training for specific groups of workers.

Mr Costa (POSTEUROP) welcomed these interesting questions, as they create a link to the training working group. Still, he cautioned against a questionnaire that is too long, and recommended a reduction in the number of questions to receive quality responses. Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) pointed to the possibility of reducing the first part of the questionnaire and of preserving the questions on age and generation management.

Mr Scott (UNI europa) was in favour of the questions remaining as they are. Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) also liked the simplicity of the questions and proposed that the working group authorise Ms Ausprung and Ms Mir to jointly refine the questionnaire and then send it off. Regarding the proposed technical seminar, which would be the 3rd CSR day, this could be held either in the context of the next working group meeting on 4 November 2010, on 27 September 2010, the day before the social dialogue committee's plenary meeting, or it could be on a completely different date.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) clarified that in order to allow the participants' expenses to be reimbursed, the proposed meeting would have to take place either within the framework and rules of one of the working group meetings that are already scheduled, or separate funding would have to be sought by the social partners through a project application.

Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) announced that she would finalize and circulate the questionnaire and then send it off. She also asked for the postal and email addresses of appropriate contacts to be sent to her. Since the next meeting of the CSR working group is not until December, members will need to be in touch by other means in the interim.

Ms Mir (UNI europa) reported from the CSR conference that took place in Stockholm in November 2009 under the Swedish Presidency of the Council.¹ A joint statement between the Swedish and incoming Spanish Presidency announced that the topic will be followed up in the first semester of 2010. The CSR working group should therefore stay informed of these activities.

Ms Ausprung thanked the interpreters for their services and closed the meeting.

¹ Further information on this conference can be found on the following website: http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/11/10/protect_respect_remedy_-_a_conference_on_corporate_social_responsibility_csr