

European Social Dialogue Committee in Central Government Administrations

SDCCGA Working Group meeting Brussels, March 29, 2012

1. Welcome

Jean-Paul Devos (TUNED), in the chair, welcomes the participants. Due to current national affairs, TUNED delegates from Luxemburg and Spain won't be able to attend the meeting. He also informs that Thora Petersen, TUNED Denmark, will retire in June and that today is her last meeting. Thora is thanked for her support and good cooperation.

He informs that as part of both EUPAE and TUNED's efforts to strengthen employers' representativeness in the Committee a letter has been sent to the Portuguese Secretary of State as well as to the Polish relevant ministry.

He notifies the ongoing evaluation made by the Danish Presidency of EUPAN on the informal social dialogue on the basis of a questionnaire sent to EUPAN delegates and TUNED and reminds the participants of TUNED official position.

The agenda is approved unanimously.

2. Image and attractivity

Nadja Salson (TUNED) provides a recap of the structure and aims of the EU-funded project on the Image and attractivity of public administrations (see powerpoint presentation attached). The type of outcomes we want still has to be defined more precisely (policy document, campaigning tools...).

Robert Sobiech presents the initial findings of its desk review (presentation attached). The available material varies considerably from one country to another, reflecting in a way the consideration given to public administrations at national level. The research starts with the citizens/users' perspective on public administration and the perspective of the civil servants themselves. A second part focuses on the perception of public administration as a (potential) workplace.

The confidence level of citizens varies a lot from one country to another but is rarely above 50%. Citizens both trust the civil service and the way it is run in only five countries. On the basis of the French example, he underlines that the general public opinion is in general lower than the public services users' opinion. The closer we are to the services, the better the opinion is. Concerning the image on civil servants, the trend is the same, users are generally more inclined to have a positive evaluation of civil servants' competences than citizens in general.

Concerning the attractiveness, most people would recommend their relatives to become a civil servant. A more general data collection on the recommendation of public sector by public servants shows considerable differences amongst the countries. Generally, civil servants themselves are satisfied with their jobs and motivated.

Robert Sobiech also researched the image given by institutional messages, especially by European institutions, OECD and the UN.

The Chair thanks the expert for its presentation and opens the first round of questions and comments.

Yves Labasque (TUNED/France) presents the so-called "Label Marianne" which has been introduced in France for front-office services, on the basis of external audits which test 19 criteria before the attribution of the label. He underlines that "public services" in general does not exist: the way citizens approach

administrations differs from one administration to another, some having a much better image (social affairs) than others (security).

Peter Kempen (TUNED/UE) asks whether there is any analysis of the perception of PPPs or privatized services and whether it is shown that public services are an essential part of Europe's competitiveness?

Robert Sobiech underlines that the question of PPPs does not raise big problems outside of the UK. He agrees with Yves on the fact that the evaluation of front line services is usually much better than the one of back office services, the latter existing only in citizens' imagination, not experience. Back and front office services however contribute to the same system. This will be analysed more in-depth during the second phase of the study.

Jacques Druart (EUPAE/Belgium) thanks Robert Sobiech for the first results which are a great synthesis and a good basis for the next steps. He asks about more precise conclusions, and whether he thinks that the general satisfaction is good or bad. He considers that the satisfaction reported in the initial results is better than is usually admitted and that it constitutes a good result for public administrations.

Karin Brunzell (TUNED/Sweden) thanks Robert Sobiech for the presentation and would like to emphasize a relatively new problem in Sweden, which is threat and violence against civil servants. She is wondering whether it would be possible to have data on the views of people who are really in need of help.

Valerio Talamo (EUPAE/Italy) asks about the sources used for the study.

Robert Sobiech used a variety of data, academic studies and European surveys as a basis, complemented by national data from EUPAE and TUNED participants. For some countries, ie Greece and Romania, there are no national data available. Concerning violence against civil servants, the phenomenon has been rising during the last years, and data are surely going to be collected, but he has no knowledge of such data now.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) reminds that 3 years ago, TUNED suggested to discuss the issue of third party violence in the framework of the informal social dialogue with EUPAN on the basis of an initiative by multisectoral social partners. At that time, the view of EUPAN was that this was not a key issue for central government administrations.

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) congratulates Robert Sobiech for his work. He underlines the diversity of perceptions levels amongst the countries, which, according to these initial findings, seems to be mostly of historical, institutional or cultural nature or relating to the degree of corruption. In this context, he asks Robert Sobiech if any EU-wide campaign could be useful for changing this, and asks if it will be possible to make recommendations which will apply to all countries.

Cécile Berson (EUPAE/France) asks Robert if other elements than historical and cultural ones explain the huge differences between the countries. She also underlines that some data are from 2005, and asks whether the crisis has an impact on the data presented.

Robert Sobiech agrees that there are at least 3 groups of countries, good, average or poor performing. There might be different recommendations for these three groups of countries. The opinion of citizens on public administration is very much linked to the country's democratic, economic, cultural and social development level. In a lot of countries, the notion of independence of the civil service is very recent, so the ability for public administration to build its own image was very limited. The next phase of the project will be crucial to answer these questions.

Concerning an evolution which could be due to the crisis, we don't have enough data to have precise conclusions and the present trends can be contradictory. In some cases, the crisis seems lead to decreased trust in public administration, in other this is the other way around.

Thora Petersen (TUNED/Denmark) queries about data on the impact of important reforms or restructuring are available. In Denmark, some reforms, for instance in the police sector, have had an important impact on the public perceptions. She also asks if the automatization/computerization in some sectors, for instance in the tax services, influences citizens' perception of the service.

Klaus Heeger (TUNED) asks whether there is a differentiation in the perception if the service is perceived as repressive or helpful, and whether evaluations of public sector reforms on the quality of the service provided are available.

Robert Sobiech has some evidences that the less the State is perceived as oppressive by citizens, the better the evaluation of public administration is. Concerning the impact of reforms, some effects can be traced in the case of particular reforms, but he doesn't know any meta-analysis on it. Automatization is very interesting, as it is supposed to be more efficient but anonymised.

Nicoletta Grieco (TUNED/Italy) considers that the policies set in place in Italy since 3 years are the main driver for the decline of citizens' image of public administrations and queried about the Impact of campaigns against civil servants.

Klaus Platzer (TUNED/Austria) thinks that there are additional reasons for job satisfaction of civil servants in Austria, linked to the quality of the social dialogue and the unified representation of employees. This should be underlined in the study.

Robert Sobiech agrees that this is a key element for job satisfaction. The unified representation of employees in Austria indicates that there is the perception of a common interest of civil servants.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) stresses the link made by Robert between citizens' trust and the level of democracy and socio-economic development. One should ask ourselves what we as social partners can do of this conclusion. One should not underestimate our role.

The Chair closes this Q&A session and thanks Robert for his contribution. He opens the second part of the debate on the image and attractivity and proposes to the participants to make a brainstorming on drivers and obstacles of a good image and good attractivity. He asks the participants to first concentrate on the factors influencing a good image.

Cécile Berson (EUPAE/France) would like that the Committee adopts a more global approach, with a focus on the values of the public service. She adds that civil servants should have a responsibility for their positions even at personal level (for instance on social networks).

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) underlines that obstacles and drivers should be dealt with together. He then mentions several key-elements in this debate: the perception of the social role of the State at national level, the aspect of values (how civil servants carry them and use them in their work: sense of public service, ethic...), the delivery of a qualitative service, which is crucial for the users, and finally the social prestige of civil servants, especially in comparison to the private sector (equity of treatment)

Christian Moos (TUNED/Germany) underlines the link between perception and good governance in general, and the way reform, especially cuts, are presented.

Philippe Soubirous (TUNED/France) shares the idea that we should underline the values, but also the missions of the public service. This should be clearly explained to citizens, as the more well-known and understood public services are, the more appreciated they are, in first line tax and control services. Back office employees and their indispensable place in the structure should be presented to citizens.

Jacques Druart (EUPAE/Belgium) evokes the EUPAN-report on customer satisfaction management and some of the key-findings: accessibility, communication, competencies, (skills and knowledge to provide

services), courtoisie, credibility, reliability (quality of delivery of the service), responsiveness, confidentiality, tangibles (facilities, equipment, staff appearance...), understanding the customer...

Klaus Heeger (TUNED) thinks that a lot of points can be summarized under the motto "transparency" which could be a priority for the Committee (access to documents, access to civil servants, security of one personal data).

Françoise Briand (EUPAE/France) underlines the link between the political environment and the perception of public administration. We have to distinguish between both.

Peter Kempen (TUNED/UE) considers the debate as to much of an experts' debate. The main points evoked are true, but we should above all ensure the equality of treatment of citizens, which has a huge impact on citizens and their perception of public administration. A good PS is essential to competitiveness and quality of life, and it is a crucial element of communication.

Anne-Claire Le Bodic (TUNED) emphasizes the role that good working conditions plays in the perception of public administration, not only by public employees themselves, but also by the general public.

Valerio Talamo (EUPAE/Italy) thinks that we should start with the values. The image depends on the way we communicate on the values, and the missions which distinguish us from the private sector. Transparency, impartiality, the importance of merit are key elements.

Nicoletta Grieco (TUNED/Italy) agrees with the majority of her colleagues and stresses the importance of the ability of the public administrations to prepare and implement measures.

Klaus Platzer (TUNED/Austria) thinks the list of obstacles and drivers mentioned could also apply to big private companies, we have to inform citizens about why the public service is doing what it is doing and what it is not doing.

The Chair considers that the level of remuneration of some top managers in the public service partly based on performance might be an obstacle to a good image by citizens.

Robert Sobiech thanks the participants for this interesting brainstorming, which elements will be included in the second-phase of the project.

The Chair asks the participants to concentrate in a second phase on the drivers and obstacles to the attractiveness of public service careers.

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) lists the level of remunerations in comparison with the private sector, the possible career developments, the common interest and values.

Marco Ouwehand (TUNED/Netherlands) also underlines the importance of job opportunities and developments in the public sector.

Carole Bentz (EUPAE/Luxembourg) thinks that salary elements are important, as well as good working conditions: job security, flexible working hours and working arrangements... Additionally, competition is supposed to be lower than in the private sector. One main obstacle to public sector attractiveness is probably the lack of material and/or resources to perform the work.

Cécile Berson (EUPAE/France) sees the main obstacles in the salary level (but how can it be solved with reduced public budgets?), the risk of being transferred to another city, the necessity to take exams, the lack of social recognition, the slow career evolutions, the dependence on political power, the lack of autonomy.

Eva Magyar (EUPAE/Hungary) thinks training opportunities are a good way to motivate public sector employees.

Yves Labasque (TUNED/France) sees the mismatch between qualification levels and actual competencies required as an important obstacle.

Carmen de la Viuda (EUPAE/Spain) also agrees with the fact that the difficulty to attain the expected results/outcomes with the means available is demotivating for public sector employees.

Valerio Talamo (EUPAE/Italy) mentions three key elements: interesting job, employers' investment in the employee, career possibilities. Additionally, well-being at work, stable work and the idea of doing something beneficial for the community are important drivers.

Robert Sobiech thinks that the qualitative interviews will allow a better understanding of attractiveness factors.

The Chair thanks the participants for the lively debate and closes the morning session.

- **Afternoon session** -

Robert Sobiech presents the draft questionnaire which has been elaborated for the qualitative survey (see draft questionnaire attached). The target population consists of public administration employees and employers, 10 experts will be selected in each country of the study. He asks the participants to help him selecting the key issues which are to be tested in order to elaborate 15-18 – mostly open - questions.

Thora Petersen (TUNED/Denmark) states that the more concrete the public administration is, the better the image is. It would therefore be important to know if the questions will be on the general image or on concrete services.

Cécile Berson (EUPAN/France): asks how the respondents will be selected and whether we'll be sure that the panel is representative.

Robert Sobiech explains that we reduce the survey to an « expert opinion survey » due to the limited resources. He hopes that these experts will be able to give a broad opinion that goes beyond their personal feelings. He requests the participants of the SDWG to indicate who should be the respondents. Anonymity will be ensured.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) reminds that we still need to determine which services we want to target including a good balance between front, middle and back offices.

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) thinks that it would be useful that everybody receive a checklist once the methodology fully defined so that the selection criteria are the same for all. A calendar would also be needed.

The Chair thanks everybody for its participation and closes this point of the agenda.

3. Adoption of the minutes

The minutes of the two last meetings (5 December 2011 and 2 February 2012) are adopted unanimously.

4. Restructuring and anticipation of change

The Chair presents this broad consultation which is an opportunity for the Committee to elaborate a strong common position which would bring credibility to our social dialogue committee, even if it is not an official consultation of the social partners. A synthesis document has been elaborated in agreement between EUPAE and TUNED, showing the different steps of the process. He asks EUPAE if the amendments made by Belgium on the initial text have been agreed by all.

Jacky Leroy (EUPAE/Belgium) responds that the first reaction to the document is a reaction as the Presidency of EUPAE. He reminds TUNED that EUPAE's position is not easy. The present representatives will be able to speak, but all EUPAE members are not present today. The first proposal of EUPAE Presidency was to erase a lot of the first part, which was one-sided and very marked by trade-union positions. He doesn't want to commit into things which EUPAE won't be able to implement. However, he thinks that the Committee is not that far from an agreement.

The Chair reminds the participants that the deadline has been set for the day after the SDWG, so the Committee is under time pressure. He therefore warmly welcomes the will to reach a common answer to this consultation.

- For the details of the amendments, see version with track changes enclosed –

Points 1 – 2 – 3: TUNED agrees with the amendments by EUPAE on the three points.

Point 4: TUNED would like to reintroduce the reference to the workprogramme

Françoise Briand (EUPAE/France) agrees with the crisis is underlying all work themes of the Committee.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) proposes :“the issue of the crisis and restructuring runs through the Committee workprogramme 2011-2013”

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) accepts the proposed compromise on behalf of the French employers

The Chair states the compromise is accepted.

Point 5: **Jacky Leroy (EUPAE/Belgium)** proposes on behalf of EUPAE to maintain the 2nd phrase “Given the importance.... and national frameworks”, replacing “is surprised” by “regrets”

This proposal is accepted by TUNED

Points 6 to 10: the deletion proposed by EUPAE is accepted by TUNED.

Point 11: The amendment is accepted.

Point 12: a new amendment has been presented by the employers, **Jacky Leroy (EUPAE/Belgium)** and **Françoise Briand (EUPAE France)** explain that it has been done in order to shorten the text.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) thinks that there is a substantial change, as “fiscal consolidation” is now taken out. It is important to state that fiscal consolidation measures are not a national-only issue any more, as it is coordinated at EU level.

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) states that not all EU-Members are enthusiastic about this EU fiscal coordination. It could be an obstacle to attract new members to the Committee

Marco Ouwehand (TUNED/Netherlands) replies that this fiscal coordination is a fact, not an option.

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) agrees with Marco but does not want to emphasize this point for strategical reasons.

Point 14: EUPAE accepts TUNED proposal.

Point 15: EUPAE has a new proposal which allows not mentioning specific countries.

The proposal is accepted by TUNED.

Point 16: The new EUPAE proposal is to keep only the first part of the text: "Since then, ..., labour law". This new proposal is agreed by TUNED.

Point 17-19: The text is accepted.

Point 20: EUPAE proposes to come back to TUNED original text, which is accepted.

Point 21: The new proposal made by EUPAE is agreed by TUNED.

Point 22 is agreed.

Point 23: EUPAE thinks that social dialogue is already included throughout the text, so that we would start this paragraph by "when public employment". This proposal is approved by TUNED.

Point 25: On the basis that trade union rights are now mentioned in paragraphe 40, TUNED can accept the deletion of 25.

Point 26: **Valerio Talamo (EUPAE/Italy)** supported by **Eric Roty (EUPAE/France)** proposes to rephrase so: "a more socially acceptable manner". **Jacky Leroy (EUPAE/Belgium)** adds that we also should maintain "anticipating changes".

Points 27 to 29: **François Briand (EUPAE/France)** explains that EUPAE is not opposed to the proposed additions by TUNED but it is useless in the text. **Philippe Soubirous (TUNED/France)** agrees with this comment.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) reminds that in paragraph 27, we are just quoting Commission's text. It is good to support the Commission where we can do it. Paragraph 28 is not redundant, as we mention the forward planning of competences and jobs' needs. Concerning paragraph 29, it's also our role to support social dialogue at national level.

Jacky Leroy (EUPAE/Belgium) proposes that EUPAE agrees to keep 27-28-29, which is accepted.

Points 30 to 32 are accepted with the TUNED amendment.

Points 33 to 35 are validated as they stand.

Point 36: **Valerio Talamo (EUPAE/Italy)** proposes to nuance with "to social dialogue where it has been done" to take into account the different national situations, which is agreed by TUNED.

Points 37 to 39 are agreed.

Point 40: **Jacky Leroy (EUPAE/Belgium)** proposes to accept TUNED proposal but EUPAE proposed to accept TUNED proposal but Italy has no mandate to accept the text after the first phrase.

Point 41: Jacques Druart (EUPAE/Belgium) explains that this wording is too aggressive and would hinder potential Members States to join the Committee. EUPAE therefore reject the text proposed by TUNED.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) explains that all the text says is that we should keep existing rights at national level.

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) thinks that the injunction made in the first phrase cannot be accepted, but that the second phrase could be kept as such.

It is agreed to keep the second phrase, as it states positively the general idea of the paragraph.

Points 42 to 44 are accepted.

Point 45: The new proposal by EUPAE should be reviewed. Nadja Salson (TUNED) states that with this phrasing, we miss the essential part of the initial text on how to inform and consult employees.

Points 46 and 47 are accepted.

Point 48 : There is a new proposal by EUPAE which does not want to give Eurofound such a monopole. TUNED accepts this amendment.

Point 49 is agreed

Point 50: Jacky Leroy (EUPAE/Belgium) proposes this deletion as such a tool does not exist or work seriously.
This change is accepted by TUNED.

Points 51 to 53 are adopted.

The Chair states that most of the points are accepted, but agreements should be found on the paragraphs 12, 26, 40-41 and 45. He proposes a break to negotiate a compromise. At the return of the delegations in plenary, the amendments are negotiated as follows:

Point 12: The initial TUNED version is accepted by EUPAE.

Point 26: Thora Petersen (TUNED/Denmark) proposes the following change on behalf of the trade unions' delegation: "Consistent social dialogue is key to change management and anticipation policies", which is agreed by EUPAE.

Points 40-41: Jacques Druart (EUPAE/Belgium) proposes on behalf of EUPAE: "The foundations of strength Essential to enforce". This compromise is accepted by TUNED.

Point 45: EUPAE proposes to rephrase: "The Committee reaffirms the importance of information and consultation of SP at all levels", which is agreed.

The Chair thanks both delegations for the very good spirit of the debates and notes that the document in its whole is accepted. He asks both secretariats to make sure that the amendments are included and the final text sent to the Commission the day after the meeting.

5. Document gender equality

Given the time constraint, **the Chair** asks the participants to briefly explain which data they have been able to collect and where the obstacles are.

Carmen de la Viuda (EUPAE/Spain) explains that her country is encountering problems with the methodology.

Nadja Salson (TUNED) thinks that we should fix a deadline for the transmission of data.

The Chair proposes that the Steering group makes a proposal of a deadline to all participants.

6. AOB

The Chair mentions some complications with the organization of the final conference on Image and attractivity, as the Czech have evoked some difficulties to organized the conference in Prague, where is was originally planned. He thanks the French employers for having proposed to explore the possibility to host the conference in Paris if the impossibility to make it in Prague is confirmed.

Eric Roty (EUPAE/France) confirms this proposal, but underlines that the best solution would be to organise it in Prague as initially foreseen.

The Chair thanks the participants for this very productive meeting and reminds that the next plenary will take place in Brussels on June 22.

APPENDIX
Participants list

TUNED Delegates

PLATZER Klaus	Austria
DEVOS Jean-Paul	Belgium
SUCHA Blanka	Czech Republic
LIIVAMAGI Kalle	Estonia
PETERSEN Thora	Denmark
SOUBIROUS Philippe	France
LABASQUE Yves	France
MOOS Christian	Germany
GRIECO Nicoletta	Italy
WEYDERT Camille	Luxembourg
OUWEHAND Marco	Netherlands
BRUNZELL Karin	Sweden
KEMPEN Peter	

EUPAE Delegates

DRUART Jacques	Belgium
LEROY Jacky	Belgium
NECKEBROECK Bruno	Belgium
BERSON Cécile	France
BRIAND Françoise	France
MURIS Clément	France
ROTY Eric	France
MAGYAR Eva	Hungary
TALAMO Valerio	Italy
TAGLIETTI Roberta	Italy
BENTZ Carole	Luxembourg
DIMITRIU Monica	Romania
DE LA VIUDA Carmen	Spain

Project Researcher

SOBIECH Robert	Poland
----------------	--------

European Commission

ZIEGLER François

TUNED Secretariat

SALSON Nadja
HEGER Klaus
LEBODIC Anne-Claire
GASSNER Diane