



## 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 11 May 2010, Brussels Postal Sector Evolution Minutes**

The meeting was chaired by the president of the social dialogue committee, Mr Bailly (POSTEUROP).

#### **1. Project proposal "social partners preparing for change"**

The final report of the previous project has been printed and distributed. It will also be mailed to all contacts on the approved distribution list. The European Commission has not yet decided on the funding request for the follow-up project introduced by the social partners.<sup>1</sup>

The Chair proposed a structure for the project organisation to the working group. A project team would coordinate the overall progress of the work, in close cooperation with the postal sector evolution working group. For each of the four themes of the project, a specific topic team would be set up, which would work with the consultant on that particular issue. The group agreed that for POSTEUROP, Poste Italiane and TNT would lead the topic team for EU funding, DP DHL and La Poste would comprise the topic team for the universal service obligation, Correos and CTT would lead on social monitoring and TNT would work on the topic of classifying new entrants. For UNI europa, Mr Baldwin, Ms Mir, Ms Valjas, Mr Saverstam and possibly one other person would work on the project. The precise composition of the team would be known by the end of the month of May, and the tasks would then be divided up on the side of UNI europa as well. Once each topic team is in place, it would work with the consultant on tasks such as validating the questionnaire or validating the results.

The consultants would be selected from among a shortlist, based on precise tender specifications. One consultant would be responsible for the topic of EU funding, while the other would work on the USO, new entrants and social monitoring.

The Chair clarified that the budget proposal for the project does not include funds for a preparatory meeting of the project team, but that such a meeting could be financed once through other meeting costs in the budget. Therefore, organisational meetings should be held mainly by phone, but a kick-off meeting with all the topic themes should take place. This meeting will take place in the afternoon of 23 June 2010 in Brussels. In case the Commission doesn't approve the entire project budget, the format of the regional

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<sup>1</sup> The project was approved for co-financing by the European Commission after this working group meeting had taken place.

seminars would need to be discussed. Once the Commission has taken a decision on the application, the call for tender for the consultants will be sent immediately.

Mr Baldwin and Ms Mir (UNI europa) pointed out that many of the consultants on the shortlist have previous experience and material on the postal sector, so if one of these companies is chosen, their cost should be less.

## **2. Communication action plan**

The Chair reported on the activities in the first semester, when a delegation of the social dialogue committee met with the Head of Unit for postal services of the Commission's Internal Market and Services DG and with the Head of Unit for working conditions and adaptation to change of the Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG. The group also met with POSTEUROP, UNI and the Universal Postal Union. In the second semester, meetings are planned with Eurofound, the IPC and BUSINESSEUROPE.

Mr Henry (POSTEUROP) requested to circulate the list of organisations and contact persons again.

Ms Mir (UNI europa) suggested to also meet with the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

Mr Henry (POSTEUROP) was not convinced by that suggestion, since this organisation does not have responsibility for employment. Similarly, postal policy is not decided at local and regional level. The group should not talk to more people than necessary, so the added value of contacting this association of local and regional governments was not clear.

Ms Mir (UNI europa) pointed out that the European social dialogue in postal services should also be disseminated to the level of the CEMR. Mr Baldwin added that this organisation should know of the existence of the committee. Even if decisions are taken elsewhere, they cause frictions and impact at the local level.

The Chair did not raise any objections to contacting the CEMR and asked Ms Mir to provide the contact details.

## **3. Relations with other working groups**

The Chair highlighted that the interface of the postal sector evolution working group with the training working group was mainly based on the common interest in EU social funds and in the European skills councils.

Mr Baldwin (UNI europa) pointed out that the main objectives of the training working group are centred around the definition of skills and key competences in the context of the transition from an older workforce to a younger age structure in different settings. Ms Mir added that the transferability of skills and workers' mobility was an important topic for UNI europa. The issue of the skills councils was also on the agenda.

The Chair considered that apart from the skills councils, the most interesting issue for the postal sector evolution working group was the topic of skills and key competences, which is embedded into change management. Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) concurred

that the issue of age structure and demography are rather more within the remit of the CSR working group.

Mr Henry added that skills don't solve the employment problem in the sector, since the postal companies will employ fewer people in the future, and those will have lower skills. The Chair agreed from a quantitative perspective, but pointed out that with the introduction of new technologies, wider skills profiles would be needed, even though this is not a matter for the great quantity of employment in the sector. In sum, there will be less volume for fewer employees with fewer skills on average. Ms Mir (UNI europa), however, highlighted the fact that there are other business models, so that the skills mix depends on the strategy of each company.

The Chair considered that there is apparently great interest in the topic of key skills and competences, as shown in the preceding discussion, so this issue should be taken into account in the context of the postal sector evolution working group as well.

With respect to a possible cooperation with the CSR working group, Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) reported that the demographic question – both in society at large and within postal companies – needs to be addressed and could be of interest to this working group. This could be presented at the November working group meeting.

The Chair considered that there are no elements for direct cooperation with the accident prevention working group. For the exchange with other sectors working group, there first needed to be clarity on the spokesperson from UNI europa's side, which should occur by the end of May.

#### **4. Any other business**

Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) brought the Eurofound stakeholder inquiry service to the attention of the working group, which allows for a research project to be carried out by Eurofound on a topic suggested by trade unions and employers' organisations. Eurofound suggested a study on the "green agenda", which would be interesting for both POSTEUROP and UNI europa.

The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.