



## 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 Plenary meeting on 12 June 2009, Brussels Draft minutes**

The President of the sectoral social dialogue committee, Mr Bailly (POSTEUROP) chaired the meeting.

#### **1. Commission information point: the economic crisis, the employment summit and the Commission Communication "A Shared Commitment for Employment"**

Mr Janssens (European Commission) presented an overview of the economic crisis affecting the European Union and the actions of the European Commission, focusing on the employment summit on May 7 and on the Communication of June 3<sup>1</sup>.



crisis.ppt

The following discussion focused on the necessity for a more sustainable economy, the creation of green jobs, the relationship between immediate actions and long-term goals and strategies, and the question of regulation. The Commission mentioned its initiatives on green jobs<sup>2</sup> and the Restructuring Forum of June 22 and 23 examining the impact of climate change on employment.<sup>3</sup> The challenge is indeed the appropriate combination of long-term strategies with immediate measures to address the crisis, but it is difficult to predict the future political decisions that will be taken with respect to the balance between regulation and liberalisation.

#### **2. Update on working group membership**

Ms Fortea Cercos (POSTEUROP) asked participants to inform the secretariat of any changes to the composition of the social dialogue committee's working groups.

#### **3. European news**

Ms Fortea Cercos (POSTEUROP) gave an overview of recent EU-level developments.



Presentation-  
European News-12.0!

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of the Communication can be found on the right-hand side of the following page:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=81&langId=en&newsId=514&furtherNews=yes>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=370&langId=en&featuresId=63&furtherFeatures=yes>

<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=81&langId=en&newsId=532&furtherNews=yes>

#### 4. Postal sector evolution working group

Mr Bailly (POSTEUROP) gave an overview of the activities of the working group, including an update on the social observatory project and the communication action plan, which includes the goal of involving new entrants into the postal market in social dialogue.



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Sector Evolution Acti

With respect to the project, Mr Baldwin (UNI-Europa) pointed out that two models of postal services and operators appear to be emerging, one high-quality full-service approach, and a low-cost model that treats mail delivery the same as delivering free flyers. Many operators also pursue diversification strategies, entering activities such as financial services, airfreight or logistics.

With respect to the communication action plan, Mr Bailly and Mr Baldwin reported on the meetings of a delegation from the social dialogue committee, composed of Mr Bailly, Mr Baldwin and Mr Wortmann (POSTEUROP), with Mr Reinbothe, Head of Unit for Postal Services at DG MARKT, and with Mr Tricart, Head of Unit for Social Dialogue at DG EMPL. The Internal Market DG committed to consultations with stakeholders on questions such as the financing of universal service, and assured the delegation that the social dialogue committee will be taken into account. The meeting with the Employment DG covered a wide range of issues, including the budget lines of the European Social Fund that can be used to strengthen the capacity of social partner organisations in new Member States,<sup>4</sup> the involvement of the sectoral social dialogue committee in the Commission's impact assessments,<sup>5</sup> and the possible future sector councils on employment and skills, as mentioned in the December 2008 Commission Communication on New Skills for New Jobs.<sup>6</sup> As the postal services social dialogue committee is particularly interested in the discussion on skills and the proposed skills councils, a letter will be sent to the relevant Commission services (Mr Lebrun, Head of Unit for Working Conditions and Adaptation to Change of the Employment DG). The attendance of Mr Tricart at the committee's 1 December plenary meeting was confirmed.

#### 5. Accident prevention working group

Mr Potykiewicz and Mr Spáda (both POSTEUROP) presented the activities on the working group, with an emphasis on the process leading up to the Joint Declaration on Accident Prevention in the Postal Sector.



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<sup>4</sup> See the documents "Social Partners" and "Social Partners as beneficiaries" on the right-hand side of the following page: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/fields/partnership\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/fields/partnership_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> The liaison forum on 21 September 2009 will be dedicated to this topic.

<sup>6</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0868:FIN:EN:PDF>

Mr Baldwin (UNI-Europa) pointed out that the declaration opens up the remit of the working group to include broader issues of health and safety, and that it emphasizes the shared responsibility of companies, employees and their unions in the field.

After both sides confirmed that consensus exists with respect to the declaration, it was signed by Mr Bailly and Mr Baldwin.<sup>7</sup>

## **6. Training working group**

Mr Costa (POSTEUROP) gave an overview of the activities of the working group.



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The ensuing discussion focused on the final report on future skills needs in postal services, which was contracted by the Commission, and on which comments were due by mid-June. Ms Mir (UNI-Europa) highlighted the speculative nature of the scenarios, which do not take the crisis into account and which extrapolate to the year 2020. The related workshop in February had shown that work in postal services is not very valued in society, and that the issue of training and the portability of qualifications are crucial for achieving high-quality work in the sector. Among other conclusions, it is worth pointing out that the majority of workers are women and that productivity is lower in new Member States.

With respect to the questionnaire on the implementation of the Joint Declaration on Training and Skills Development, as only 8 responses have been received, POSTEUROP proposed to extend the deadline, to which UNI-Europa agreed. The results could then be presented at the next working group meeting (4 November 2009), and a project proposal could be developed that is in line with the Commission's priorities.

UNI-Europa also asked the working group to consider the proposed sector councils for employment and skills and to elaborate a proposal on their setup. POSTEUROP agreed that the working group should be ready to respond to the Commission on this issue.

## **7. Corporate social responsibility**

Mr Wortmann (POSTEUROP) and Ms Mir (UNI-Europa) presented the results of the 2008 questionnaire on corporate social responsibility (CSR).



CSR

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The Chair pointed out the importance of disseminating the joint statement on CSR, and that topics such as the demographic challenge and age management will become more significant in the future. It is also important for a company to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of its customers.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=8770](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/dsw/public/actRetrieveText.do?id=8770)

Mr Anderson (UNI-Europa / UNI Global) then gave a presentation on sustainable development in the postal sector and on the activities of the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) Consultative Committee in this regard.



Sustainable  
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The Chair encouraged participants to respond to the survey mentioned in the presentation.

The discussion then turned to the next meeting of the working group on 4 November, where a new work programme should be agreed and presented to the plenary meeting on 1 December. POSTEUROP saw more room for additional work on diversity, and suggested a joint statement. In addition, the usefulness of a further questionnaire should be considered and discussed. The last working group meeting in April showed that the issue of quality of employment was important for UNI-Europa, while environmental best practices are an important concern for POSTEUROP. The suggestion would thus be to discuss the topic of the quality of work in the postal sector evolution working group, since it is not fully linked to CSR. There it would be necessary to define the elements that constitute the quality of work, while in this (CSR) working group, the work on diversity could continue.

UNI-Europa again emphasized the importance of the social pillar of CSR, and suggested an evaluation of the good practices that were presented at the April meeting. Important topics that also could be examined could be postal services in rural areas and in urban areas at risk of marginalisation. UNI-Europa takes this position without ignoring the environmental issues, as its work at the UPU shows.

POSTEUROP concluded that this would need to be discussed at the next working group meeting, but that agreement exists to continue the work on diversity. The topic of quality of employment could be linked to the postal sector evolution working group, and it would need to be decided how to tackle the environmental issues.

In concluding, the Chair suggested work on a joint declaration on the key issue of diversity, and underlined that both environmental challenges and the quality of employment are important to address in the context of social dialogue.

## **8. Exchange with other sectors working group**

Mr Baldwin (UNI-Europa) reported that this working group is currently not active, and that there are differing opinions on whether it should continue. In light of the ongoing diversification process of postal operators, however, UNI-Europa is in favour of continuing its work, and establishing contacts with other sectoral social dialogue committees such as road transport or civil aviation. Ms Ausprung (POSTEUROP) will return to her duties later this year, and at that stage a reasoned request could be made to the Commission for an additional working group meeting to jump-start its activities.

The Chair reconfirmed the next working group meetings for 2 September (postal sector evolution and accident prevention) and 4 November 2009 (CSR and training). He closed the meeting by thanking the participants and especially the interpreters.