



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue

Social dialogue, Industrial Relations

Brussels, 10 April 2015

**SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE
COMMITTEE
INSURANCE**

DRAFT Minutes of the Plenary meeting

10th February 2015

The meeting was chaired by Mr Hopfner (AGV-InsuranceEurope). The agenda and the draft minutes of 6 October WG meeting were adopted.

1. The new European Commission's priorities in the social field, including re-launching the Social Dialogue at EU level

Ms Winiarska (DG EMPL) presented the Commission's new structure and the highlights of the 2015 work programme, which signals some political discontinuity from the previous Commission. Among the new initiatives under the social *chapeau*, two areas will be particularly targeted: a) the employability and integration of long-term unemployed (including measures to promote skills development), and b) labour mobility (including targeted revision of the Posting of Workers Directive). DG EMPL informed also about the up-coming high-level event "A new start for social dialogue" on 5 March 2015¹. The conference gathering representatives of cross-industry and sectoral social partners (EU and Member States), national governments and the European institutions aims to address the following issues: a) better involvement of social partners in EU policy making; b) interaction between the social partners' agreements and EU regulation; c) industrial relations and capacity building at national level.

In the exchange of views, the NL employers said that the issue of workers' employability is highly relevant for the sector. Social partners stressed that the process of impact assessments should be more transparent. Social partners' consultation should not be mixed up with public consultations. Mr Vidonja (InsuranceEurope) called also for more visible role for the sectors.

2. The demographic challenge in the insurance sector

In the tour de table on national initiatives, social partners reported on: a) DE: issue of stress management gaining importance; b) BE: "Business and Society" initiative on sustainable business models, taking into account longer working lives.

Ms Schikora (DE employers) presented the on-going activities of the association in the field of health and safety at work. In 2014, AGV organised two successful workshops on management of psychological strain and issued an awareness-raising publication,

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&furtherEvents=yes&eventId=1028>

disseminating the best practices in the area of company health management among the members. In the follow-up discussion, UNI Europa called for the focus of health and safety measures to be on prevention and that the problem of psychological pressure on employees in the financial sector is well visible. DE trade unions listed the fact that the employee should be available via email in the evenings as a problem. A Bipar representative noted the long-term consequences of stress and AGV agreed that more guidelines are needed on what can be considered as health&safety best practice.

Ms Ankarcrona (SE employers) presented the background and outcomes of a recent conference organised jointly with the SE trade unions on the topic of stress, sick leave and work organization. The SE social partners are currently discussing the problem of absenteeism, which is higher in insurance than in other sectors (on average 3.15% compared to 1.90% of working days over a year). The SE trade unions added that there is an understanding that the stress levels in the industry are high and the situation was made worse by the economic crisis. After the presentation the social partners exchanged on the good ideas of actions to address stress at work, such as focus on leaders, tripartite structures including worker representatives and "train the trainers". The social partners agreed that these issues should be addressed in the follow-up demography project.

3. Telework

The social partners officially signed the joint telework declaration. On this occasion, Mr Iozia (UNI Finance) stated that good quality of work in the sectoral social dialogue translates into better quality of companies' services. Mr Hopfner expressed his content with the declaration, although the compromises were not always easy to find. Mr Pissoort (Bipar) said the text is a good example of how social dialogue helped to overcome the initial differences of opinions. Mr Pozniak (AMICE) reiterated his organisation's commitment to social dialogue in the sector.

In the discussion on the follow-up to the statement, Ms Maes (UNI Europa) reiterated the importance of bringing the text to national and company level and help social partners' affiliates and members to understand the EU social dialogue. InsuranceEurope discussed various channels of dissemination that will be used.

In the context of this subject, Mr Boulogne (Achmea) and Mr Blijlevens (NL employers) presented the practice regarding telework and new workplace organisation in the largest Dutch insurance group Achmea. The company, which has offices also in IE, GR, RO and SK, aims to be regarded as green and sustainable employer and offers workers a number of flexible solutions, notably 1-2 days a week via telework. Currently, 6,000 out of 17,000 company employees use some form of remote work. In the discussion on the presentation, the DK trade unions asked about the social dialogue and the SE unions asked who pays for the equipment. Mr Hopfner welcomed the presentation and said that looking at practices of companies such as Google or Microsoft, there are certainly still many possibilities to explore.

4. ISSDC work programme 2015-2016

The new work programme of the Committee was adopted.

5. Any other business

Mr Hopfner proposed that at the 12 May working group meeting, the social partners exchange ideas for an electronic booklet with best practices on the demographic challenge.

Participants 10.02.2015

Employers (8 ♂, 8 ♀)

Ms Ankarcona (SE)
Ms Bastien (BE)
Ms Bauby (FR)
Mr Blijlevens (NL)
Ms Bos (InsuranceEurope)
Mr Casanova (FR)
Ms Ego (DE)
Mr Hopfner (DE)
Mr Lestanguet (BIPAR)
Ms Middelboe (DK)
Mr Pissoort (BIPAR)
Mr Pozniak (AMICE)
Ms Schikora (DE)
Ms Sheppard (AMICE)
Mr Vidonja (InsuranceEurope)
Mr Zdenek (CZ)

Workers (12 ♂, 8 ♀)

Mr Attard Biancardi (MT)
Ms Bellucci (IT)
Ms Bergdahl (SE)
Mr Bernard (FR)
Mr Budolfson (DK)
Ms Clausen (DK)
Ms Cuciniello (IT)
Mr Demey (BE)
Ms Halme (FI)
Mr Hassel (SE)
Mr Hayward (UK)
Mr Kubašek (CZ)
Ms Maes (BE)
Ms Pateyron (FR)
Mr Prieto (ES)
Ms Saller (UNI Europa)
Mr Schmidt (DE)
Mr Seychell (MT)
Mr Utricca (ES)
Mr Toth (HU)

European Commission

Ms Winiarska (DG EMPL)

Experts and Observers:

Mr Hellman (NO)