Revised work programme of the European Social Dialogue for commerce 2010-2011

Introduction
Reflecting discussions and initiatives in the 2009 social dialogue, the main focus in 2010 will be on core employment and labour relations issues of common interest in European commerce.

The social dialogue for commerce continues to build on a wide range of previous joint outcomes, which all support the general aim of economic and social cohesion, and a future development of commerce, producing good quality services for the consumers while providing employment to large numbers of people, under safe and good working conditions.

An accurate and improved follow-up of the results of the social dialogue will therefore get special attention and the development of suggestions for its further dissemination and awareness raising by social partners on different levels will be discussed.

A variety of tools and working methods will be used in order to realise the social partners’ objectives and to take into account the various specificities and aspects of the sector (SME, big and multinational companies, wholesale, retail, subsectors...)

The following specific issues will be raised in the 2010-2011 social dialogue:

1. Adaptation to change, vocational training and skill needs

The social partners will continue their joint work on the identification of the increasing requests from consumers, the technological innovation and the future skill needs resulting from the future developments in our sector. As a follow-up of the Commission’s communication “New skills for new jobs” and of the study Comprehensive sectoral analysis of emerging competences and economic activities in the European Union: Distribution and trade”, they intend to finalize and assess their joint project entitled “Establishing a European network for anticipating skill needs in the commerce sector with specialised educational bodies. They will also strengthen their dialogue with other relevant stakeholders such as the ILO, DG Education and CEDEFOP.

They will also discuss further follow-up of this initiative and in particular agree on the design, the provisional budget and the content on an EU-funded project to be presented by June
2011 aimed to establish the relevant body on anticipating skill needs and agree on a first range of activities to be implemented in this framework (2011-2012).

In this context, they will also continue to assess the impact on skill needs of challenges faced by commerce such as the introduction of ICT, globalisation and emerging markets. Actually, the social partners are aware of the fact that it is essential to modernize and adapt vocational education and training. Finally, their common work in this field will also be aimed to improve the image of the sector to attract sufficiently young people in the sector to counterbalance the effect of an ageing workforce.

Further follow-up of their initiative "European Commerce Competence" on the translation and dissemination of innovative pedagogic modules will also be taken care of, as well as close monitoring of its impact in the various countries.

2. The global financial crisis and its impact on the labour market in commerce

The current economic crisis has a direct impact on businesses, consumers and employees in commerce and, for this reason, EuroCommerce and Uni europa commerce have signed a joint statement on this important matter in December 2008.

On the basis of this statement, measures taken to fight the crisis should take into account the joint statement on Corporate Social Responsibility of 2003, especially in the clause on social dialogue and freedom of association.

They have the intention to deepen their discussion and analysis of social and employment aspects of the crisis with a view to minimize negative effects and to identify possible further joint actions. In continuity with their "Common contribution to some flagship initiatives of the "EU 2020: A European strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" adopted on 4 August 2010, they will continue following up the impact of the various initiatives proposed in the framework of the EU 2020 strategy and issue joint opinions on the more relevant aspects of common interest to be further agreed.

3. Joint follow-up of EU policies with a social impact on commerce

EuroCommerce and Uni europa commerce will follow-up and take actions in reaction to European Commission proposals and initiatives having a particular interest for the commerce sector. Migration, cooperation with candidate countries, demographic change, youth and active inclusion of the weakest groups, general working conditions matters will be dealt with in this framework (to be further defined after the implementation of the working plan of the new Commission). Further research and data gathering on these aspects will also be undertaken, mainly with the support of the Dublin Foundation.

In particular, they will continue their discussions and exchange of views on the outcomes of the Retail Market Monitoring exercise initiated in early 2009. They will therefore pursue their regular contacts with DG MARKT and the European Parliament and discuss a further follow-up of their common position on the social aspects of the retail market monitoring report.

The social partners will exchange views further to the publication of the second-stage Commission consultation on the Working time directive, if possible in link with the issue of the reconciliation between professional and family life, in order to identify and clarify issues of common concern. They will also have an exchange of good practices in this respect when relevant.
4. **Health, safety and well-being at workplace**

The social partners will ensure adequate monitoring of their joint project on the promotion of a safer working and shopping environment completed in 2009 and in particular the impact of the toolkit produced in the framework of this project at national, local and company level. This follow-up will be ensured through regular updates in the framework of the SD Committee and/or further joint measures to be agreed upon.

The social partners will continue to develop their activities on third-party violence at work together with European federations of employers and trade unions from hospital, private security, education and local government sectors. In particular, they will implement a common project with the financial support of the European Commission aimed to raise awareness and to disseminate the multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence at work signed the 30 September 2010.

In addition, they will strengthen their cooperation and exchange of good practices regarding various issues related to health, safety and well-being of commerce employees at workplace and develop with this objective further contacts with relevant EU bodies such as the OSHA (European Agency for Safety and Health at work).

A specific approach related to H & S issues for professional and managerial staff will also be discussed.

5. **Improving the effectiveness of social dialogue**

The social partners will ensure that each newly adopted document in the framework of the social dialogue will contain a specific clause describing the follow up and/or implementation process adopted by mutual agreement.

EuroCommerce and Uni europa commerce will monitor with an increased attention the follow-up of the various outcomes of their social dialogue in the various countries and at different levels (regional, local, company...). The aim of such exercise, implemented since 2005 will be to issue joint recommendations (taking also into account the outcomes of the Commission Communication on the review of the Sectoral social dialogue) aimed to promote a more effective follow-up and valorisation of the social dialogue outcomes. In addition, the social partner intend to develop new targeted measures and practices (projects, workshops, regular discussions, etc.) aimed to improve quality of such follow-up of all their texts and activities.

They will also continue their survey aimed to assess the impact of their joint outcomes in the various countries and possibly at company level as agreed in June 2010 and experienced with the Danish social partners in November 2010 (next countries to be surveyed: Italy and Slovak Republic, possibly Metro as a company case).

The social partners will also support the development of employer and trade union organisations in new member states and candidate countries (capacity building) as a prerequisite for social dialogue, in particular through their participation to specific projects implemented in cooperation with the training centre of the ILO (one for the employers and one for the trade unions, with a final common seminar).