

Work programme of the European Social Dialogue for commerce 2012-2013

FINAL VERSION

Introduction

Reflecting discussions and initiatives in the social dialogue in 2010 and 2011, the main focus for 2012 and 2013 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 2012-2013 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 "Agenda for new skills and jobs" and of their joint project entitled "Establishing a European network for anticipating skill needs in the commerce sector", they have presented in September 2011 a EU-funded project aimed to set up the relevant body on anticipating skill needs and agree on a first range of activities to be implemented in this framework

This project is entitled Establishing a European sector council for commerce on employment and skills and will have the following main objectives:

- Develop systems of Commerce sector related labour market intelligence
- Gather, share and analyse data
- Facilitate the exchange of good practices and their diffusion
- Launch studies , analysis and expertise
- Anticipate skills and competencies needs
- Establish and promote standard for qualifications and competencies
- Improve transparency of qualifications and competencies
- Enhance worker employment and geographical mobility
- Increase the attractiveness of the sector
- Promote health and safety (prevention) policies at work
- Improve knowledge access to training by employers and workers on the field

These bodies aim to anticipate the evolutions of vocational qualifications in order to optimize the matching between skills and professional profiles. Such bodies are intended to put tools at the disposal of companies to implement adequate training policies and to raise awareness among companies and employees of the need for training.

Therefore, it is important for the commerce social partners to bring together representatives of such bodies in order to share knowledge regarding the evolution of companies and workers needs, the evolution of skills and jobs, the assessment of practices, tools and methodologies of anticipation.

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.

The social partners will also exchange views and improve their cooperation on other related issues such as professional qualifications, ensuring a better transition between school and labour market, adult learning, the promotion and validation of informal learning. They will also strengthen their dialogue with other relevant stakeholders such as the ILO, DG Education and CEDEFOP.

2. EU Employment strategy and the commerce sector

EuroCommerce and UNI Europa Commerce will discuss their contribution to the implementation of the EU2020 strategy, with a special focus on the flagship initiatives "Youth on the move" and "Agenda for new skills and jobs" as well as the EU Employment Guidelines.

In addition, the social partners will follow with the greatest attention the developments of the European policies and legislations with regard to their impact on the sector and on the labour market in general. Such topics will include new initiatives related to active labour market policies, youth employment, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, mobility and transitions in the labour market.

EuroCommerce and UNI Europa Commerce will also discuss how their sector could contribute to facilitate access, return retention and career development with a view of achieving a more inclusive labour market. They will do their best to agree on a common position on this important issue.

The social partners will also further debate about support to older workers who may need special consideration and support which helps them with dealing successfully with their situation. Working with new technology and particularly in knowledge-related functions, the

ways of older people to approach their tasks may differ from those of their younger colleagues. Actually, accepting age diversity in working life also means to accept the related diversity in ways of solving problems and approaching tasks.

The social partners are of the opinion that policies aiming to retain older workers into employments that fit them and focuses on investing in training for older workers should therefore be seen as ways to improve its productivity by raising the quality of work and efficiency as well as offering better service to customers, also thanks to transfer of experience to others.

As far as young people are concerned the social partners are concerned that one in five of all young Europeans are without work, representing more than 5.5 million young people under 25. While the economic crisis and European unemployment have a profound effect on workers lives, the current youth unemployment has devastating effects on a whole generation. Since commerce is a sector where young people can gain access to the labour market, this issue is particularly relevant for the social partners.

Actually, they are aware that workers needs are different according to the moments of life. Working students, young parents and older workers may have different needs that must seriously be taken into account. For this reason, they will also cooperate with other relevant stakeholders, such as social NGOs like AGE Europe and the Youth Forum in the framework of the European Year for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity 2012.

Other important initiatives announced in the above mentioned agenda such as undeclared work (included bogus self-employment), integration of migrant workers and fighting discrimination on the labour market will also be discussed and followed by the social partners with a particular attention.

In line with the Common contribution of the social partners for commerce to some flagship initiatives of the "EU 2020: A European strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" adopted in 2010 and with the other EU initiatives mentioned in the "Agenda for new skills and jobs", the social partners will continue to focus on the promotion of more and better jobs in their sector. They will also exchange information, data and views on part-time work and its impact on female participation in the employment in connection with the drafting by the Commission of a study aimed to assess the effect of the existing rules. This will help contributing to the consultation of the social partners by the Commission on the review of the EU legislation on part-time work planned for 2012.

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. Further research and data gathering on these aspects will also be undertaken, mainly with the support of the Dublin Foundation. In particular, the social partners will contribute to the drafting of a study on working conditions in the retail sector

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 and common initiatives towards 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 and of the social aspects of the Single Market Act.

The social partners will continue their exchange of views on the future developments related to the review of the Working time directive and will follow with attention the activities of the cross-industry social partners and/or of the European Institutions in this field.

They will also have an exchange of good practices in this respect when relevant and will contribute to the ongoing studies of the Dublin Foundation in this field by data gathering and analysis.

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. After the conclusion of their project implemented 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, they will devote a particular attention to the implementation and reporting phase, in coordination with the other concerned sectors.

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 (included stress at work) and develop with this objective further contacts with relevant EU bodies such as the OSHA (European Agency for Safety and Health at work).

The social partners will also have an exchange of views on the new EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Workplace to be elaborated by the Commission for the period 2013-2020. In particular, the issue of psycho-social risks, connected to the one of third-party violence and dealt with by OSHA in the framework of a specific campaign will be dealt with accurately.

In connection with point 1 of this program, the European social partners will focus their debates on the improvement of use of funding possibilities (with a special focus on EU budget headings and of the European Social Fund in particular) of training and health and safety policies.

Specific questions related to H & S for professional and managerial staff will also be debated in the frame of the points mentioned above.

5. Improving the effectiveness of social dialogue

The social partners will ensure that each newly adopted document in the frame 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...). 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, Slovak and Italian social partners in 2010-2011. Sweden, Belgium, Spain and the Metro Group should be surveyed in 2012 and Germany, Greece, Czech Republic and the Carrefour Group in 2013.

The social partners will also continue to support the development of employer and trade union organisations in new member states and candidate countries (capacity building) as a prerequisite for social dialogue.

On the basis of the conclusions of the common workshop organised as the final activity of their respective 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), the social partners may organise specific sub-regional joint activities on issues of common concern, possibly with the financial support of the European Commission, aimed to support the development of social dialogue at company/ local/ national level where relevant and provide their members with specific expertise on EU social policies and therefore improve the quality of their participation to the social dialogue committee .