

Editorial

On 28 June the Commission adopted its Social Policy Agenda. The Agenda, which sets out the main social policy guidelines for the next five years, will take centre stage in the European Council discussions in Nice in December.

The Agenda is strongly inspired by the main results of the Lisbon European Council: economic progress and social cohesion must go hand in hand. This requires the integration of economic, employment and social policies and the cooperation of all relevant actors, including the social partners at all levels.

The Agenda aims to modernise the European social model and promote full employment in order to face the challenges and opportunities ahead. The priority is quality: in work, in industrial relations and in social policy.

In order to achieve this, the Agenda contains a raft of measures: anticipating and managing change, exploiting the potential of the knowledge-based society, promoting mobility, modernising and improving social protection, reinforcing equal opportunities for women and men, consolidating fundamental rights, combating discrimination and preparing for enlargement.

The Agenda is innovative in terms both of the working methods suggested and of the interaction it seeks between all actors and the policy development process itself. In particular, it requires all relevant actors – public authorities, social partners, undertakings or NGOs – at all levels – European, national, regional or local – to work together towards common objectives.

In this new political context, the role of the social dialogue can only increase in importance. Strong action by the social partners is particularly required to develop the employability of the workforce, occupational and geographical mobility, procedures for information and consultation and aspects related to work organisation and new forms of work.

The social dialogue is on track to meet these challenges. At the High-Level Forum in Brussels on 15 June, the social partners at cross-industry level announced the opening of negotiations on temporary work, and their first meeting was held on 27 June. They also announced that they are jointly seeking to identify ways of facilitating access to lifelong learning and skills development and that they will continue their joint discussions on teleworking.

In addition, many sectors have made commitments dealing with jobs, working conditions, vocational training and equal opportunities. I would particularly like to mention the European agreement on working time for mobile staff in the civil aviation sector, which recently became the fourth agreement signed at sectoral level. These are promising developments, but more can be done. I particularly look forward to the social partners' response to the first stage of consultation on modernising and improving employment relations, launched by the Commission in June. This is an area in which the social partners can make a real contribution to the European employment strategy.

Odile Quintin
Director-General
Employment and Social Affairs DG

Main story

Private security: a major sectoral agreement on the modernisation of work organisation

Social dialogue in the private security sector is maturing all the time. Proof of this fact lies in the joint text – which can rightly be described as historic – recently adopted by the social partners: UNI-Europa for the unions and CoESS for the employers. They have reached agreement on a subject that is both sensitive and political: the modernisation of work organisation.

CoESS and UNI-Europa believe it is necessary to develop a constructive social dialogue which is well coordinated at the different levels (European, national, enterprise). Only such a dialogue will be able to take account of the concerns of all the parties and the search for balanced solutions which are acceptable to workers and employers.

In previous policy statements the social partners already made it clear that security firms engage in very harsh, sometimes unfair competition in order to win contracts. In most cases this is to the detriment of the quality of services. What is more, CoESS and UNI-Europa note that some security firms have no hesitation in operating on the very limits – or even outside – of the regulatory framework which governs work organisation in the sector. This is why CoESS and UNI-Europa consider it is time to make an inventory of the problems posed, an in-depth analysis of their causes and effects, and a systematic search for the responses necessary to improve living and working conditions and to modernise work organisation.

...

Employment & social affairs



Open Forum

Marc PISSENS,
President of CoESS



CoESS (European Confederation of Security Services) currently unites 16 national associations (14 of them in the Member States), all of them representing their country. It is the European mouthpiece of companies employing a total of around 800 000 workers.

Social dialogue in private security: continued progress

A great deal of work has been done in the field of social dialogue over the past five years. We owe this principally to a group of highly motivated partners on both sides of the negotiating table and the strong and constant support of the Employment and Social Affairs DG and its presidency within the dialogue process. The desire of both sides to professionalise the sector and cast off its poor image once and for all, together with their search for a balance to create the best conditions for individual development, through serious, in-depth dialogue, have brought highly encouraging results.

CoESS has provided continuity by adopting a strategy centred on a number of formally agreed policies. These include the two-year rotating presidency and the creation of strong working parties responsible for the follow-up and realisation of important tasks (goals, strategy, data, statistics, training, quality and enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe). The London Conference (1996) established the following bases for action:

- mutual recognition of the interlocutors,
- obligatory approval for companies and individual workers.

Training is the key to the industry and the reason for launching the first "Force" project (with support from the European Union) which produced an in-depth study of basic profiles in the sector.

This initial research was followed by a second study under the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which resulted in the production of a training manual. The cooperation between the social partners made it possible to lay the foundations for determining the minimum training requirements for activities in the sector. These training needs were defined with the help of specialists on the subject, from inside or outside the sector. The result is a weighty document which examines both training needs and how they are being met. A second congress in Berlin (1999) produced a report

on public works contracts which is not only of interest to the security sector but can also serve as an example for the services sector as a whole. If the industry wants to become more professional and improve the quality of its services, then there is also a need to convince the customer. In recent years some regrettable examples of imposed prices have cast the sector and its users in an unfavourable light and led to some security disasters. This document gives future users the tools necessary to be able to establish an objective quality-price ratio and to opt for the financial solution which is most advantageous to them.

Social dialogue has also produced a joint declaration setting out a future vision of the "modernisation of work organisation"⁽¹⁾.

The sector needs to adapt its services to the needs of our modern society. In particular, there is a need for greater flexibility and a better anticipation of demand. In this area too, in-depth and sustained dialogue has made it possible to achieve a comprehensive consensus aimed at ensuring a balance between working and private life by concentrating on working conditions.

Now to the last, but not least important aspect which is of concern to us all. A first step has been taken with a view to integrating the Central and Eastern European countries.

Our ultimate aim for the years to come is to work to achieve greater harmonisation between the Member States while seeking to defend the economic interests of the sector in general, and of the Member States in particular, within a framework of social balance. Continuous support through social dialogue will be necessary to achieve this. In this respect, I can only hope that activities will continue in the same spirit and with the same enthusiasm as in the recent past.

(1) See "Main story" in this issue.

CoESS and UNI-Europa believe that areas to be explored could include continuous training, working hours, the reduction of excessive working time, reduction of overtime, half-time or part-time work, career breaks, etc.

The social partners are convinced of the need to apply innovative and coordinated solutions designed to modernise work organisation in security firms. Their aim is to improve professionalism, technological development, quality of service and customer satisfaction on the one hand, and the quality of life and working conditions for workers, job security and development, the regularity and level of income, training standards and systems for preventing pro-

fessional risks on the other.

CoESS and UNI-Europa consequently undertake to analyse the national and European regulatory frameworks for work organisation as a matter of priority. On the basis of this analysis they intend to submit concrete recommendations to the Member States and European institutions in order to develop legislation and regulations which are compatible with the modernisation of work organisation.

In their desire to implement change while maintaining the necessary balances between the economic and social dimension, the European social partners in the private security sector believe their mission must be jointly to

establish a reference and action framework at European level. Its implementation will then be recommended to the social partners at national level.

Contact: *Hilde.De-Clerck@cec.eu.int*
Tel. (32-2) 296 67 63

Joint declaration by the social partners to the Forum of 15 June 2000

The social partners have adopted a joint declaration in keeping with the new strategy implemented by the Lisbon European Council to create a competitive economic area based on innovation, knowledge and social cohesion.

The social partners (UNICE, ETUC and CEEP) express their desire to contribute to the strategy's success and stress the importance of social dialogue as an essential element in managing change. They want stronger links between macroeconomic and structural policies, and greater labour market efficiency achieved through active policies to promote employment and social inclusion.

In this connection, they announce the start of negotiations on temporary working and indicate that they are finalising a report presenting examples of good practice by the social partners in implementing the guidelines on employment. Work is currently in progress on a joint contribution on the missions, field of activity and operation of an observatory on industrial change.

Social protection is central to the partnership. The social partners support the concerted strat-

egy proposed by the Commission and want to be very much involved in the activities of the new Committee for Social Protection.

In connection with the enlargement initiatives – and in particular the 1999 Warsaw Conference – they would like to see Community social dialogue and consultation bodies include social partners from the Central and Eastern European countries as observers.

Contact: Michele.Thozet@cec.eu.int
Tel. (32-2) 299 22 79

Meeting of the "labour market" group

At their meeting of 5 July 2000 in Brussels, the social partners submitted their positions on the draft "employment package" drawn up by the Commission, indicating their initial thoughts and orientations regarding the future employment guidelines for 2001.

Odile Quintin, Director-General of the Employment and Social Affairs DG, chaired the meeting and noted "quite wide-ranging agreement on the analysis of the Commission's 'employment package'". She drew particular attention to "the appreciation of the Com-

mission and social partners for the latter's actions in regard to the 'adaptability' pillar". On this point the debate made it possible to clarify mutual expectations.

There was wide-ranging consensus on the structure of the guidelines and the balance of the pillars. New elements such as the improvement in the economic situation and the Lisbon meeting nevertheless had to be taken into account, this implying the grouping of certain subjects and a redrafting of the "adaptability" pillar.

The current joint exercise on the compendium of good practice could aim to render the actions of the social partners more transparent. They could then work together on elements of joint analysis with the aim of evaluating their own implementation of the employment strategy.

The social partners stressed that work organisation was a complex phenomenon covering many fields, methods and places for action. It is important to clarify the debate so as to facilitate reflection on this point.

Contact: Michele.Thozet@cec.eu.int
Tel. (32-2) 299 22 79

Sectoral

Cleaning industry

The sector is preparing for Union enlargement and focusing on the applicant countries: "The social partners in the industrial cleaning sector and European Union enlargement towards the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs)" is the title of the joint declaration adopted on 3 April by the cleaning industry social dialogue committee.

This text is inspired by a shared recognition on the part of UNI-Europa (trade unions) and EFCI (employers) of the importance of and difficulties involved in preparing for EU enlargement to include the Central and Eastern European countries, especially in terms of competitiveness.

UNI-Europa and EFCI believe that the implementation of the following measures is a necessary condition for the sector's harmonious development in the EU and Central and Eastern European countries:

- organisation of the industry in the CEECs,
- support in setting up independent employers' and workers' organisations which will recognise each other at all levels (national, regional and local),
- support in developing a well-coordinated social dialogue between these partners at all

levels (company, regional and country),

- the creation of closer links between these social partners and EFCI and UNI-Europa,
- the participation of the social partners representing the cleaning sector in the CEECs in the activities of the EFCI and UNI-Europa at European level.

EFCI and UNI-Europa will endeavour to promote these actions in the framework of their European social dialogue and to launch joint projects. These will be concerned in particular with promoting professionalism and better working conditions in the CEECs, structuring the profession and improving its image. Such an approach will require Union support at a financial, logistical and political level.

The social partners undertake to disseminate the results of their work in the CEECs (especially regarding vocational training), closely to monitor the sector's development in these countries and to support their partners in the CEECs in meeting the challenges of EU membership. They will encourage cleaning companies which set up subsidiaries in the Central and Eastern European countries to offer their workers good working conditions.

Contact: Hilde.De-Clerck@cec.eu.int
Tel. (32-2) 296 67 63

Entertainment

The conference on training theatre technicians, held in Turku (Finland) on 26 and 27 May 2000, ended with a first joint declaration.

The conference, supported by the Commission and organised by the Finnish social partners in the entertainment sector, took a close look at the training of theatre technicians in order to identify needs and implement new strategies.

This first initiative brought together representatives of the employers (PEARLE) and unions (UNI-MEI) as well as the training institutes in question. Attention focused in particular on sector trends (multiskilling, harmonisation of skills, externalisation) and national differences in the training systems.

The meeting concluded with a joint declaration, expressing the desire for continuing training to be recognised as a right for all entertainment sector workers. It recommends a number of joint initiatives – especially in the framework of the European Social Fund and Community programmes.

Contact: Michele.Thozet@cec.eu.int
Tel. (32-2) 299 22 79

Footwear

Last May the social partners (CEC and ETUF:TCL) reached an agreement in principle on extending the code of practice on banning child labour to incorporate all the fundamental rights at work. They also signed, on 2 June 2000, a joint position relating to the new Social Agenda.

The code of practice, adopted in 1995 (updated in 1997), will include all the fundamental rights at work as defined in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) declaration of June 1998 on fundamental principles and rights at work.

The joint position of 2 June on the Social Agenda highlighted the sector's major contribution to employment in several European regions, the fight against undeclared work, alternative social security financing, the importance of increased use of information and communication technologies, training and enlargement. The social partners represented on the social dialogue committee have agreed to reflect on a strategic vision for the sector (2000-2005).

Contact: *Rudi.Delarue@cec.eu.int*
Tel. (32-2) 296 47 06

Postal services

The Training working party is actively preparing a European round table on training, to be held in Brussels in November 2000.

The social partners in the postal services sector (POSTEUROP and UNI) have defined the procedures for preparing their activities and drawn up an initial progress report on the gathering of good practices.

The various postal services have already submitted very positive contributions on good practices in all the fields identified (employability, new technologies, adaptation to change, methods and tools).

Contact: *Carlos-Alberto.Lopes@cec.eu.int*
Tel. (32-2) 295 21 71

Sugar

The management and workers' representatives from the European sugar industry met in Brussels on 23 June for the presentation of an "interactive tool" for safety training in the sugar sector. This unique joint event helped to promote a shared approach to safety issues throughout the European sugar industry.

In focusing on human behaviour – nearly always an issue where safety is concerned – this tool is designed to improve safety and reduce accidents to a minimum. It covers all safety-related aspects and makes extensive use of images.

This interactive tool was developed between 1997 and 2000 by the social partners in the sugar sector (CEFS and SETA-UITA) with the

help of the Community's Leonardo da Vinci programme. It is already available in 11 languages in all EU sugar factories and refineries and could soon be available in certain Central and Eastern European countries as well.

Submitted as a contribution to the Lisbon European Council on 23 and 24 March 2000, the product received the support of Anna Diamantopoulou, Commissioner responsible for Employment and Social Affairs.

Contact: *Carlos-Alberto.Lopes@cec.eu.int*
Tel. (32-2) 295 21 71

Tanning

On 10 July the social partners signed an innovative code of practice in the presence of Odile Quintin (Director-General of the Employment and Social Affairs DG).

The social partners have adopted a joint contribution to the preparation of the new Social Agenda. In it, they stress the importance of technological innovation, of the training of human resources, and of consultation with the social partners by the Commission services.

Contact: *Rudi.Delarue@cec.eu.int*
Tel. (32-2) 296 47 06

Textiles and clothing

On 5 June 2000, the social partners signed a joint contribution to the drawing up of the European Commission's new Social Agenda. They also participated in the seminar held by the Commission on 17 July 2000 on implementing the 1997 action plan on the competitiveness of the European textile and clothing industry.

In their contribution, the ETUF:THC and Euratex present their opinions and priorities on social policy. The sector's social partners highlight in particular:

- the need to develop human resources through continuing training and the recognition of skills and qualifications,
- the management of industrial change,
- the necessary development of sectoral social dialogue which must complement and be coordinated with cross-sectoral social dialogue,
- alternative social security financing.

The ETUF:THC and Euratex believe that enlargement and the international social dimension are both areas which warrant inclusion in the new Social Agenda.

A delegation has been chosen to discuss implementation of the action plan for competitiveness in the textile-clothing industry, organised by the Commission (Enterprise DG in cooperation with other services such as the Employment and Social Affairs DG).

Contact: *Rudi.Delarue@cec.eu.int*
Tel. (32-2) 296 47 06

The graphics industry

The social partners (Intergraf and UNI-Europa Graphical) held a seminar on employment and competitiveness on 9 and 10 June 2000, with the support of the European Commission.

The study on the development and competitiveness of the European graphics industry served as the reference document for the discussions.

Health, safety at work, continuous training, globalisation and work organisation were all discussed at a seminar which helped create a better understanding of the respective positions and which clarified the context for deeper cooperation.

Contact: *Rudi.Delarue@cec.eu.int*
Tel. (32-2) 296 47 06

A special enlargement issue of our newsletter has just been published. Issued in September and entitled "Preparing for enlargement", it aims to provide a reference for the way in which social dialogue can be incorporated in the enlargement process, the initiatives of the European social partners and the tools made available to them by the Commission. This document can also be consulted on the Internet at the following address:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-dial/social/index_en.htm

The joint agreements and declarations mentioned in this newsletter can be consulted on-line at the "Main joint texts" database in French, English and German at the following address:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-dial/social/euro_agr/index_en.htm

European Social Dialogue

Newsletter from the European Commission
Employment and Social Affairs DG/D

- **Published by:**
*Employment and Social Affairs DG/D.1,
European Commission*
Fax: (32-2) 299 24 66
- The *European Social Dialogue* newsletter can be consulted on the Internet in the various language versions, at the following address:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-dial/social/index_en.htm