

Editorial

Dear social partners, readers and friends,

I am very happy to present you this newsletter; indeed I intend to renew the previous practice of issuing two social dialogue newsletters per year.

Social dialogue continues to feature high on the European policy agenda. **President Ursula von der Leyen** stressed in her political guidelines: ***"I am a firm believer in the value of social dialogue between employers and unions, the people who know their sector and their region best."*** This is also reflected in the mission letters to Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, and to Executive Vice-President for An Economy that Works for People, Valdis Dombrovskis.

This newsletter on social dialogue is your tool for better sharing information, making the results of social dialogue better known and therefore reinforce its impact on social and employment policies at all levels.

I count on your contributions to make the newsletter as attractive and useful as possible. Do not hesitate to send us your suggestions for further improvement.

I wish you a good reading.



Jörg Tagger
Head of Unit
European social dialogue

News from the Commission

Tripartite Social Summit

The autumn **Tripartite Social Summit** of 16 October 2019 was dedicated to the general theme "Progressing on the social and economic dimensions for a competitive, fair and sustainable Europe: The role of social partners and social dialogue". It was the last Summit under the President Junckers Commission. The discussions focused on three areas: a just transition to a climate neutral economy, investing in skills and improving access to adult training and designing an industrial policy fit for the future. The Tripartite Social Summit is a forum for social dialogue at highest political level, taking place ahead of the spring and autumn European Council. Read here more [information](#).



European Labour Authority (ELA) starts its work

The European Labour Authority (ELA) started its activities on 16 October 2019 with an inaugural ceremony and the first meeting of its Management Board. The official launch took place two years after President Jean-Claude Juncker had announced the initiative in his 2017 State of the Union address before the European Parliament. European Union Member States had decided to select Bratislava as the seat of the ELA. Read more [here](#). The social partners are represented in the Managing Board (two representatives from each side) and in the Stakeholder Group (five representatives from each side).



President Juncker and the Prime Minister of Slovakia, Peter Pellegrini, unveil the ELA logo at the opening ceremony. Photo: European Commission

Social partners consultations on new initiatives, hearing and meetings

The consultation meeting between the Commission and the social partners in view of the preparations of the **Annual Growth Survey (AGS) 2020** was held on 26 September 2019. The meeting focused on key employment and social challenges in the context of the 2020 European Semester. The Commission is organising consultation meetings with social partners ahead of the AGS since 2012. The written contributions of social partners will be published together with the AGS 2020 on the [website](#) of the Commission.

Happy birthday (sectoral) social dialogue!

2019 is a special year for the Sectoral Social Dialogue. 20 of the 43 Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees celebrate their 20th anniversary. In 1998, the “Commission Decision on the establishment of Sectoral Dialogue Committees promoting the Dialogue between the social partners at European level”, stimulated joint requests by employers and workers organisations to create Social Dialogue Committees (Agriculture, Inland Waterways, Railways, Sea Fisheries, Maritime Transport, Telecommunications, Postal Services, Banking, Industrial Cleaning, Commerce, Construction, Footwear, Hotel and Restaurant, Insurance, Live Performance, Personal Services, Private Security, Sugar, Temporary Agency Work, Textiles/Clothing). However, some of the SSDCs existed already before as joint committees, dating back to the 70’es and 80’es.



Contributions from Social Partners



Gas

Following a break of about 7 years, the social partners in the gas sector, **Eurogas, IndustriAll European Trade Union and European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), relaunched their work** with a well-attended plenary meeting on 28 October 2019. Social partners showed a joined commitment to position the gas sector in the transition towards a decarbonised economy and to manage this transition in a socially responsible way.

Rail

On 16 October 2019, CER (the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies) and ETF (the European Transport Workers' Federation) entered into **negotiations for an autonomous agreement promoting the employment of women in the railway sector**. Women account for less than 20% of the railway workforce, far below the average participation of women in the labour market (46%). For some professional categories, this figure is even lower. The social partners aim to change this, so not to miss out on the valuable contribution of women, to promote diversity at the workplace, and eventually bring the railway sector image closer to the one of the society in which rail customers live. CER and ETF have addressed the topic of women's labour participation with several initiatives over the last decade and decided now to step up their action.

Live performance

On 10 October 2019, the European social partners signed a joint declaration on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of European social dialogue, in the presence of Joost Korte, Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. The social partners underlined the importance of European social dialogue and its contribution to European employment and social policies. Furthermore, social partners called upon national governments to create the necessary conditions for building up a stronger social dialogue. Referring to the specific characteristics of the live performance sector, social partners stressed the role of culture and arts in society, the freedom of artistic expression and the promotion of cultural diversity. In their joint declaration social partners present a list of proposals addressed to the European Union, Member States and to themselves in areas such as professional career development, health and safety and labour mobility in the sector with often short-term working patterns or double or excessive taxation of performers and touring companies.

Read more www.pearle.eu www.fia-actors.com



Furniture

On 20 June 2019, the European social partners of the furniture industry (EFBWW, EFIC and UEA) signed a joint letter to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to explain their views on the use of chemical flame-retardants in furniture. More in particular, they asked ECHA not to limit the ongoing restriction process on a number of flame-retardants to residential and domestic future, but to extend it to office furniture. This would increase the effective protection from the health risks deriving from hazardous flame-retardants at the EU level. The use of flame-retardants is on the agenda of the furniture SSDC since 2017. Read [here](#)

Variety pays off



Personal services/Hairdressing

The ERGOHAIR project enhanced **social partners' capacity to address musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in the hairdressing sector**. The project funded by the Commission under the support to social dialogue call for proposals focused on ergonomics and the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders. Social partners developed targeted MSDs recommendations and a dissemination strategy. They adopted a Medical Reference Document on MSDs with guidelines for developing a healthy work environment from an ergonomic perspective. The social partners also adopted the Declaration of Brussels concerning the promotion of better ergonomics in the sector.

Hospitals and Healthcare

The European social partners HOSPEEM and EPSU published their **follow-up report on the Directive 2010/32/EU on the prevention from sharps injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector**. The report builds on 30 replies from national sectoral social partners from 20 countries and contains recommendations to the national and EU level social partners, European institutions as well as Member States. Three brochures accompany the report for the various target audiences. Read more [here](#)

Civil Aviation - Air Traffic Management (ATM)

The social partners in Air Traffic Management (CANSO, ETF and ATCEUC) have promoted through a project, funded under the Commission's call for proposal to support social dialogue, their Toolbox for successful social dialogue in the implementation of the Single European Sky. The social partners have produced a **video Promoting social dialogue in European air traffic management** with notably the participation of Henrik Hololei, Director General for Mobility and Transport, to further promote the toolbox vis-à-vis their affiliated organisations, as well as towards the European Institutions.



ATM final workshop Rome 3-4 September 2019

Road Transport – Urban Public Transport

UITP (Union Internationale des Transports Publics) and ETF (European Transport Workers' Federation) have finalised a joint project, funded by the Commission under the social dialogue budget line, to **support the social dialogue in Urban Public Transport in Central and Eastern European Countries**. Their project aimed to strengthen the capacity of social partners to develop the national social dialogue as well as to improve the knowledge of the European social partners about the situation at national level. The project events and discussions are summarised in the final report, published in 10 languages.



Postal Sector

Five scenarios on what could be the postal sector in 2030: this is the output of the last Post Social Dialogue Committee project supported by the Commission under the social dialogue call for proposals. These scenarios were built jointly by employers and trade unions in a step-by-step approach through four meetings in 2018-2019. This project was innovative for two reasons: first, it allowed developing five scenarios on the future of the postal sector forming the basis for some strategic reflections; secondly, it provided the opportunity for out-of-the-box thinking and a high interaction between participants.



Industrial Cleaning

The social partners in the European Social Dialogue Committee for Industrial Cleaning (EFCI and UNI-Europa) adopted on 29 October 2019 their "[Joint Statement on the Impact of Digitalization on Employment in the Cleaning and Facility Services Industry](#)". The statement addresses the topics of data collection and use, work-life balance and narrowing the skills gap. Social partners' common goal is to achieve a smooth and successful digital transition for the sector that leads to increased productivity, higher quality of services, improvements in labour conditions and safety gains.

Further news from social partners organisations

European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)

- On 19-20 September 2019 CESI held a project conference on "[Precarious work: Empowering trade unions to address new challenges](#)" in Palermo. It took stock of precarious working conditions in the different Member States and aimed to find possible policy and legislative solutions, with a view to ensuring equal treatment and fair working conditions in accordance with the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- A conference on "[Trade unions for zero tolerance towards third-party violence at work](#)" was organized on 25 October 2019 to raise awareness, build capacity and find solutions for workplaces safe from violence. The conference took place in the context of the European-level [guidelines to tackle third-party violence](#), signed by CESI as a member of the TUNED delegation in the Central Government Administrations social dialogue.

European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism (EFFAT)

- The final conference of EFFAT's project "[Bioeconomy and a future biobased food industry and agriculture sector: how can workers' organisations shape the change?](#)" funded by the budget line for information and training measures for workers' organisations, took place on 3 October 2019. The project showed that the development of biobased value chains has significant job creation potential, can safeguard current employment levels and can have substantial direct implications for workers when it comes to required skills and career paths.

News from the EU agencies/institutions

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The General Court issued on 24 October 2019 its [judgement](#) on Case T-310/18. The case was launched by EPSU in May 2018, after social partners asked the Commission to transform their agreement on information and consultation rights for civil servants into EU legislation and the Commission decided not to do so. In its judgement, the General Court ruled that the Commission is not obliged to submit a proposal for a decision to the Council on a social partner agreement when it receives a joint request from social partners. EPSU has two months to decide whether it will appeal the judgement.

EUROFOUND

Recently published report and working papers:

- [Challenges and prospects in the EU: Quality of life and public services](#) – 22/10/2019
- [How to respond to chronic health problems in the workplace?](#) – 15/10/2019
- [Representativeness of the European social partner organisations: Insurance sector](#) - 07/10/2019
- [Representativeness of the European social partner organisations: Banking sector](#) - 07/10/2019
- [Upward convergence in employment and socioeconomic factors](#) – 25/09/2019
- [Minimum wages in 2019 - Annual review](#) - 04/06/2019
- [The involvement of social partners in national policymaking](#) – 23/05/2019
- [Company initiatives to align apprenticeships to advanced manufacturing](#) – 28/02/2019
- [Country update](#)

EU-OSHA



In 2019 EU-OSHA celebrates its 25th anniversary. Over the years, EU-OSHA has established an extensive network of partners and close collaboration with over 30 countries promoting a risk prevention culture across Europe. Cooperating effectively with national focal points, their tripartite networks, and other partners helped to ensure that Europe's workplaces have become safer, healthier and more productive.

Winners of Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards successfully manage dangerous substances

The EU-OSHA's 14th Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards (Good Practice Awards booklet) highlighted good practice in managing dangerous substances and recognised organisations that take a proactive, participative approach to assessing risks and implementing solutions to find out more.

New OiRA risk assessment tools

- ETUCE and EFEE have developed two online tools to help Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and Secondary Education institutions to assess occupational safety and health risks and take preventive and effective action, not only for teachers but also for all staff concerned!
- A new OiRA tool for the hotel and restaurant sector is developed by Hotrec and EFFAT, with support from EU-OSHA, and has been validated at EU level.

Musculoskeletal disorders in the workplace

- Conversation starters tool for workplace discussions about musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) contains guidance for managers and employees on communicating about MSDs in a range of different jobs.
- The new Napo in the workplace resources enable organisations to use animation films to raise awareness about MSDs.

The next 2020-22 Healthy Workplaces campaign will focus on the prevention of work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

Send us your contribution

You have a contribution for the next edition of the newsletter? Please contact the editor. We also look forward to your comments and suggestions.

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