



EU initiatives in the field of employment and social affairs in 2008

During the liaison forum meeting held on February 11, the European Commission announced the main initiatives taking place in 2008.

Consultations:

The long-awaited 2nd phase of the consultation on the revision of the European Works Councils directive has finally been launched in late February 2008 (see article on page 3).

The second phase of the consultation on restructuring and the anticipation of change is also expected in July 2008.

Finally, a consultation on the protection of the workers exposed to tobacco smoke at their workplace not initially planned in the European Commission work programme 2008 will be issued.

Mid-term review of the European Commission Social Agenda 2005-2010:

Mr. Špidla, EU Commissioner for employment and social affairs has decided to launch a mid-term review of the Social Agenda of the European Commission. The Communication is expected for July 2008 and European social partners are expected to contribute.

The answers received at the occasion of the social reality stocktaking consultation (see CEC answer on page 2) will also help to elaborate the communication.

Next important meetings:

The *Tripartite Social Summit* will be held on 14 March 2008 in Brussels. CEC will be represented through the CEC-Eurocadres Liaison Committee.

There will be a discussion about the new integrated guidelines on employment of

the Lisbon strategy. The European Social Partners will also report on their intention to revise the parental leave directive and about the possible negotiation of an agreement on Life-long learning as planned in their work programme 2006-2008.

A *Forum on social policy* organised by the European Commission will take place on 5 and 6 May 2008 in Brussels.

Publications:

The Report on Industrial Relations 2008 will be published in September.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/reports_en.htm

An evaluation of the functioning of the sectoral social dialogue committees will be issued in 2009 together with the first ever Communication on sectoral social dialogue with the aim to improve it (a questionnaire will be sent to social partners).

Communication tools:

Several videos on European Social Dialogue are available on the Social Dialogue European Commission website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/videos_en.htm

(Subtitles in all EU languages will be provided soon).



SUMMARY:

- IN BRIEF:

- *EU initiatives in the field of employment and social affairs in 2008*

- SOCIAL AGENDA:

- *CEC replies and comments to the Bureau of European Policy Advisers analysis on "Europe Social Reality— a stocktaking"*
- *Commission invites social partners to negotiate about European works councils*
- *CEC Conference "Managers' Role in European Works Councils and other Information, Consultation and Participatory Bodies", 5 & 6 June 2008, AIRBUS Toulouse*

- MEMBERS' ACTIVITIES:

- *CEC and CCP press conference in Madrid*
- *ULA's "Führungskräftestudie 2007": A study about a manager's social and professional life in Germany*

SOCIAL AGENDA

CEC STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT THE FOCUS OF EU'S SOCIAL POLICY REMAINS ON ISSUES THAT ARE CLEARLY RELATED TO LABOUR MARKET ISSUES, WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION AND INCLUSION

CEC REPLIES AND COMMENTS TO THE BUREAU OF EUROPEAN POLICY ADVISERS ANALYSIS ON "EUROPE'S SOCIAL REALITY - A STOCKTAKING"

CEC views the study on "Social Reality" as the beginning of a discussion on whether the EU's Social (Policy) Agenda should be placed on a substantially broader basis.

CEC concludes that the Commission apparently considers including new political fields in its political agenda, especially in the field of social policy.

For CEC, the Lisbon process that has been the defining element of EU policy in the past years is built on three "pillars":

- 1) innovation as a driving factor in economic growth;
- 2) the transition to a knowledge society;
- 3) the need for social cohesion and environmental renewal.

CEC is convinced that the political instruments that have been developed under the Lisbon strategy (the European Employment Strategy, the Open Method of Coordination etc.) have set up a well-functioning and sufficiently stringent system of policy coordination. These instruments ensure political progress in each of the three "pillars".

Therefore, CEC currently does not see a need for a

much broader-based political approach in dealing with social policy issues at the community level. Rather, CEC fears that overstressing the agenda in the field of social policy might ultimately hamper the efficiency of the existing policies.

In CEC's understanding of a European Social model, the EU - but also the social partners - can legitimately play an important role in reaching social policy goals such as:

- improving working conditions;
- enhancing equal opportunities;
- securing universal social protection and inclusion.

Many of these policy goals are being adequately addressed in the study on "Social Reality".

Other subjects however, go much further, for instance the chapters referring to "The citizen as a consumer", "The impact of mass affluence", "The trend to individualisation".

Employee organisations such as CEC are undoubtedly affected by some of these developments, in particular the trend to individualisation, as it is the case of the political

system as the whole.

However, CEC does not see an urgent need for new political instruments in order to manage social "mega-trends" at the EU-level.

CEC also doubts whether the concept of "Social Reality" itself really is a useful political category. It might be too shapeless and nondescript to allow for coherent policies.

CEC strongly recommends that the focus of EU's social policy remains on issues that are clearly related to labour market issues, working conditions and social protection and inclusion.

As mentioned above, the CEC is convinced that the Lisbon Process, the European Employment Strategy and the Open Method of Coordination (and related policy instruments) have set up a functioning framework of policy coordination.

Full position and detailed answers to the questions available on:

http://www.cec-managers.org/download/CEC_position_socialreality_2008_EN.pdf

COMMISSION INVITES SOCIAL PARTNERS TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS

SOCIAL AGENDA

On February 20, the European Commission today invited trade unions' and employers' representatives to help improve the role of European Works Councils in consulting and informing employees.

European Works Councils (EWCs) currently operate in 820 major companies across the EU, covering some 14.5 million employees. This second stage consultation gives social partners the opportunity to start negotiations on updating and improving the way the bodies operate, with a view to revising the existing legislation.

"European Works Councils have a key role in anticipating and managing the social dimension of change in large enterprises Europe-wide. They also contribute to improving corporate governance – a key factor in sustaining competitiveness," said Vladimír Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employ-

ment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. "For the sake of both, workers and companies, we need to make sure European Works Councils can play their full role during the restructuring process and the mechanisms for dialogue established at transnational levels. I consider the consultation paper to be balanced and to constitute an excellent basis on which the social partners could negotiate a revision of the Directive."

The revision of the 1994 Directive governing European Works Councils is one of the Commission's legislative priorities for 2008. European Works Councils are an important instrument in ensuring socially acceptable corporate restructuring and in developing European partnerships at corporate level.

The social partners are being asked, in particular, to express their opinions on possible measures to ensure the effectiveness of employees' transnational

information and consultation rights. They are also asked to recommend ways to improve the practical application of the Directive and ensure more coherence among the various Community legislative instruments in the field of information and consultation of employees.

The consultation with the social partners (under Article 138 of the Treaty) will run for six weeks. They then have the possibility to launch negotiations (under Article 139) with a view to concluding a European-level agreement, which then forms the basis of revised legislation.

Consultation available on: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/consultation_en.html

At this occasion the CEC will reaffirm the need for and the benefits of a specific representation of managers within those bodies. This topic will also be the theme of CEC annual conference (see below).

AT THIS OCCASION THE CEC WILL REAFFIRM THE NEED FOR AND THE BENEFITS OF A SPECIFIC REPRESENTATION OF MANAGERS WITHIN THOSE BODIES

CEC CONFERENCE

"MANAGERS' ROLE IN EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS AND OTHER INFORMATION, CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATORY BODIES"

5 & 6 JUNE 2008 - TOULOUSE, FRANCE

SITE AIRBUS FRANCE SAINT-MARTIN, TOULOUSE

For the CEC European Managers, it makes sense to pay closer attention to the European Works Councils (EWC) during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

This conference will address the presence and the role of managers in the EWC and other consultation bodies such as the EWC in the European Company SE.

The link will be made between the economic performance of a company and the quality of its European social dialogue.

The debate on the revision of the European Works Councils directive is now open. This conference is the occasion to express the specificity of our category, the managers, a growing population in Europe.

Programme: <http://www.cec-managers.org/download/prog-toulouse-en.pdf>

To register please contact: info@cec-managers.org



With the support of the European Commission

CEC AND CCP PRESS CONFERENCE IN MADRID

The European umbrella organisation and its Spanish member ask for the establishment of the third electoral college for executives and managers in Spain

The Secretary General of the European Confederation of Managers (CEC), Ludger Ramme, and the President of Spanish Confederation of Managers and Professionals (CCP), Ignacio de Navasqués, claimed participation rights for managerial staff in European companies (SE). Navasqués also insisted on the necessity of creating a specific electoral college for the executives in Spain. These demands have been collected by different mass media following the press conference that took place on January 30th in CCP, in Madrid.

Ignacio de Navasqués announced the intention to ask for the revision of the

European directive on EWC'S by introducing the necessary changes to enable the managers to be represented and to negotiate directly within the company. In this context he said that "it is unreasonable that our rights are negotiated by trade unions that do not defend our interests." Ludger Ramme added that a continuous dialogue with the managers is a guarantee of success for the businesses. This topic will be one of the central themes of the Conference that CEC will hold on 5 and 6 June in Toulouse (France), on the eve of the six months French Presidency of the EU.

During the press conference the differences regarding the number of men and women in managerial positions was also highlighted. The General Secretary of CEC said that the European Organisation is working to ensure a

greater presence of women in the category of managers. Navasqués recalled that CCP is waiting for the official data from the Ministry of Labour, regarding the number of women in highly professional positions. CCP requested for statistics in the frame of an agreement concluded with the Ministry.

In addition, the General Secretary of CEC European Managers introduced the so-called "CEC Managers Network", a database aiming at connecting Managers all over Europe and at exchanging experience and knowledge. There are currently already 640 professionals registered.

More information:

www.cec-managers.org

CCP Website:

www.confcuadros.com

**ULA'S "FÜHRUNGSKRÄFTESTUDIE 2007": A STUDY ABOUT A MANAGER'S SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE IN GERMANY**

In November 2007, ULA issued its new study on the professional and social status of German managers.

About 3 500 ULA members have answered to 50 questions on their professional life and expectations, political views, and social situation. The survey is based on an earlier study, which had been conducted in 1996.

Compared to 1996, German managers are younger and the percentage of

women has increased. This is also the case for the educational level, which has further evolved from a high base level. A university degree, which has already been in the past a general standard, has now become more or less an indispensable prerequisite for a managerial position.

Moreover the gap between East and West of Germany is slowly disappearing, especially with regard to wages. Although conserva-

tive and centrist political views continue to be dominant among the participants, the views on family life have changed substantially. The dual-earner model, in earlier years rather exceptional, is gradually becoming normal among married managers. Generally speaking, younger managers are more dynamic, mobile and international.

The study (in German only) is available on www.ula.de



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ABOUT CEC

The CEC represents 1,5 million executives and managerial staff in Europe organised into national federations and European branch federations. Since the end of the 1980s, the CEC contributes, as a social partner, to the European social dialogue. The CEC has made the task of defending the managers' specific interests its own, while maintaining dialogue with other parties.

CEC is consulted by the European Commission on all initiatives in the field of employment and social affairs (articles 138 and 139 EC Treaty). It is also part of the employees delegation in the negotiation with the employers' organisations at European level.

The CEC promotes a European integration clearly in favour of the principle of performance and competition, but also the social market economy and a value-oriented way of conducting business, since the respect of social obligations is an added value for economy in the long run.