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## Western Balkans Project

### “Strengthening Social Dialogue – Shaping European Integration”

**Podgorica (Montenegro), 27-28.10.2016**

Hotel Nikić, bb Kralja Nikole, Podgorica, 81000 Montenegro

#### *Short Report*

In follow-up to the project set up by Eurofedop to inform its members from Western Balkan countries about best practices of social dialogue and basic trade unionism, one more seminar was organised in the location of Podgorica, Montenegro. The trade union delegates who participated in the seminar, came from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Austria, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.



*Barbara Rotovnik, Fritz Neugebauer, Dejan Jauković (President of Trade union organization Mtel (SO M-tel, Montenegro) (USSCG)), Bert Van Caelenberg, Norbert Schnedl*

Fritz Neugebauer, President of Eurofedop, opened the seminar and underlined the importance of the cooperation with EZA for the organisation of projects by Eurofedop. Moreover, he underlined that Europe should aim for building an ecosocial market economy.

The organisation of EZA was represented by Norbert Klein, responsible for the coordination of projects within EZA.

Barbara Rotovnik, from the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro, held an interesting speech about the negotiations which the European Union and the country of Montenegro are involved in with a view to the country's accession to the European Union. In particular, she referred to the need for candidate countries to adopt the *acquis communautaire* and focussed on the chapters 19, 23 and 24 of this *acquis*, respectively dealing with the Social policy and employment (19), Judiciary and fundamental rights (23) and Justice, freedom and security (24).

Moreover, she spoke about the consultation launched by the European Commission on a European pillar of social rights. The European Union is not social enough and measures are required to reinforce the social dimension. Thus social dialogue is identified as being essential for promoting a well-functioning social market economy. Skills development is recognised as enabling people to use the opportunities offered by the new economy. Wages should be of a level allowing all persons in employment to enjoy a decent standard of living. Gender equality should be achieved in all areas, including employment, pay and pensions.



The questionnaire on the social pillar is very extensive and we as Eurofedop should focus in our reply on the core of our business: the public service and social dialogue.

Ms Rotovnik also took part in the debate between the trade union delegates about their current concerns and preoccupations. Trade unions of today are confronted with a declining trade union membership and questions are asked about the role of trade unions and who controls the extent to which agreements are implemented and complied with?

Other speakers were Viorel Rotilă (FSSDR, Romania) who spoke about trade unions and the social media, Mark Freeman (POA, United Kingdom) who spoke about the outsourcing of public services and the work through agencies and Antoon Jansen (ACP, the Netherlands) who spoke about trade unions and how they can keep and expand their membership.

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Those speakers were also the moderators of the subsequent discussion in working groups. It was underlined that the importance of informatics will only increase and trade unions should take account of this. Examples of best practices were given, for example the social model as exists in the Netherlands and Austria. The president of the GÖD (public service trade union of Austria), Norbert Schnedl, explained that the trade union success depends on keeping close contacts with the members on the work floor.

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