**European Federation of
Employees in Public Services**

EUROFEDOP SEMINAR

Capacity building for social dialogue
in the Post and Telecom sector

Vienna (Austria), 21-22.06.2018

Short Report

This seminar was specially intended for members of Eurofedop from the Western Balkans.

The Post and Telecom sector in the Western Balkans is in full evolution. With the liberalisation of the post and telecom markets in the European Union, and considering the process which countries from the Western Balkans are currently involved in with the aim of joining the European Union, liberalisation and privatisation have gradually also become key notions in this part of the European continent.

On the one hand, the current seminar was intended for drawing a picture of what the situation today is in this particular sector in the Western Balkans and, on the other hand, it wanted to help trade unions from these countries, member organisations of Eurofedop, in becoming active trade unions, using all their potential as partners in social dialogue and responding positively to what new technologies can offer them in their daily mission of defending the interests of workers of Post and Telecom in the Western Balkans.

The seminar started with a message, shown on the big screen in the meeting room, from Johannes Hahn, Austrian, Commissioner for Enlargement in the European Union, who expressed his support for the action of Eurofedop and recalled the opportunities which will be offered through the presidency of the European Union, which will be taken over by Austria as from the 1st July.

Jadranko Vehar, trade union expert from Croatia, gave a description of the matters of current importance to workers and trade unions of the Western Balkans and made a call for setting up a platform within Eurofedop, where trade unions from the Western Balkans can get information about how to apply for financial support from the EU.

Filip Banković held an interesting and enthusiastic intervention on how Telecom Srbija (Serbia), the company where he is the Chief Technology Officer, manages to respond successfully to the new challenges in the world of Telecom.

Frankie Watters, law expert from Ireland, explained that, although employers are not really obliged to engage in collective bargaining in his country, the Irish Labour Court can force them to improve terms and conditions enjoyed by workers. Moreover, there is the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, where the right to collective bargaining is recognised.

Karin Petter-Trausznitz is responsible for training trade union activists in the FCG/ÖGB, Austria. She gave a survey of the aspects linked with the training of trade union activists and underlined the importance of supporting and encouraging the activist in his daily contacts with workers. Moreover, she advised that trade union activists take regular breaks.

Jelena Soms of the Lithuanian Labour Federation (LDF) indicated how digitisation and robotisation are becoming more and more the normal thing in our everyday lives and how trade unions should respond to this. Trade unions are not against those new developments but are vigilant against inappropriate working conditions resulting from those developments.

Henk Slotboom, co-founder of Idea, an investment advice company, gave a survey of how European postal incumbents, in particular the Dutch Post, developed from a traditional postal operator into a multinational company (PostNL). Initially choosing the way of hard competition, with neglect of workers' interests, PostNL has started today a process of quality preservation, affordable prices and workers' protection.

Viorel Rotilă, managing director of FSSR (Romanian Health Care Trade Union), described the strategies used by his organisation to become a successful trade union. Use of European funds, conduction of research, computerisation with the development of own communication channels, organisation of protest actions online and in the streets, are some of those strategies.

Vlasta Mesarić from Croatia drew the conclusions of the session. These last two days, it has become clear that trade unions have to work on themselves and good examples were given on how to do that.