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EZA Council Meeting

Sofia (Bulgaria), 20/05/2015

"Secure and strengthen the European Social Dialogue"

Bulgaria is one of the European countries where social dialogue needs support. Through the organisation of its Council Meeting in this country, EZA underlined the importance it wishes to give to this matter in the discussion on the social Europe.

The theme of the EZA Board was: "Secure and strengthen the European Social Dialogue".



For EZA, the starting point remains: Personality; Solidarity; Subsidiarity. A social market economy and a social partnership which implement and embody the principles of social ethics.

Furthermore, an interesting debate took place on the origins, the foundations of European social dialogue.

There is no doubt about the task which the European Union also has in this respect. Strengthened by the position of Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, it is of the greatest importance that national organisations participate in the debate on the evolution of social dialogue and put into practice what has been concluded at those debates. The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses should correspond with the reality as it exists in the different countries and sectors.

There is general agreement about the need for strengthening the dialogue at sectoral level. But are all the partners involved in this dialogue? In many countries, the position of the employers' organisations is weak. And also as far as the workers are concerned, shortcomings can be noticed at sectoral level.

Eurofedop insisted during the debate that the public sector would be taken seriously during discussions. Local and regional authorities also play a big role in the democratisation process. Moreover, we remain convinced that it is the Commission's intention to get a place for all social partners around the discussion table. The recognition of the social partners has been legally established on the basis of 3 criteria which have to be fulfilled. We are of the view that, on the basis of this recognition, a broad basis should be created as support for all social partners to ensure that European decisions would also be transposed at national level.

One item during this Council meeting was the celebration of Roswitha Gottbehüt for the 25 years that had served EZA. She received flowers from the new secretary general, Sigrid Schraml.



Reports on Southern Europe, the Baltic countries, ILO activities, Education and Training concepts were presented by the vice-presidents.

BOFOS (Serbia), NEZAVISNOST (Serbia) and AZAD (Malta) were admitted as observers.

Bjørn van Heusden, secretary of WOW, Dr. Gabriele Stauner, Chairman of EZAB, former member of the European Parliament and Prof. Dr. Franjo Topić, President of Napredak Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia were unanimously co-opted as members of the Board.

The responsibility over the organisation of the Council and subsequent seminar was in the hands of PODKREPA.