



EUROFEDOP Seminar Implementation of good criteria of social dialogue in the public sector and public enterprises

**24-26.09.2015
Ljubljana (Slovenia)**

More than 100 participants from 22 countries were welcomed by Bert Van Caelenberg, Secretary General of Eurofedop, who opened the seminar, organised by Eurofedop in cooperation with EZA (European Centre of Workers' Questions) and its member organisation from Slovenia, SDZNS (Healthcare Trade Union of Slovenia).

At the opening ceremony, the floor was given to representatives of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health of Slovenia, experts from EU Institutions (European Commission, Eurofound), EZA, a university professor-researcher as well as representatives from the organising trade unions (Eurofedop and SDZNS).



The seminar was divided into three parts. At the end of each part, working groups were set up, during which the participants exchanged their views on the subject under investigation.



Part one was about the way in which social dialogue is organised and functions today in workplaces in practice. The participants moved with this aim from the meeting room to a workplace, namely the university hospital of Ljubljana, where SDZNS is actively involved in representing the interests of the healthcare workforce. It became clear that management and trade union regularly talk with each other and, so, that a kind of social dialogue exists and functions in the hospital. Nevertheless, whereas the management gave the impression that everything is running smoothly, the trade union firmly underlined that everything is not perfect. For example, it regularly happens that healthcare staff are not paid for the overtime they do.



Experiences of social dialogue from different countries in Europe were the subject of part two. The presentations given by trade union spokesmen showed that those experiences range from disappointing and in need for improvement (Croatia) to encouraging and successful (Switzerland). The members underlined that, in order for social dialogue to function well, some conditions have to be fulfilled. Mutual trust was recognised as one of the most important of those conditions. But trade unions also have to look into the mirror and do something themselves about the declining trade union membership and weakening interest in what trade unions do and stand for. In particular, young people should be convinced again to join the trade union movement. Better communication of trade union successes, even the smallest ones, was indicated as an important means to achieve that aim.

The question if social dialogue is a powerful tool was raised in part three. In general, the members answered affirmatively to this question. Social dialogue, if rightly implemented, can definitely bring about social changes and be beneficial for the economy and society. Social peace and stability were mentioned as important conditions for social dialogue. Social dialogue automatically leads to less confrontation. There is no alternative. Together, we have to aim in our national countries and at European level for bringing our views more in harmony with each other and deal with problems in the public as well as private sector, in solidarity.



In his closing speech, Fritz Neugebauer, President of Eurofedop, referred to the important role reserved for social partnership in the treaties of the European Union. He launched a call towards the members of Eurofedop, in spite of the different conditions those members have to work in in their national countries, for bringing their positions more closely to each other. We have to work hard for improving jobs in the public service. Trade unions should also not be blind to the problems experienced today by our society, such as the massive migration and refugees flows on the European continent. We have to show solidarity and play our role in dealing with this situation.

The President ended his speech by referring to the tools which trade unions have at their disposal such as the right to strike, which is a legitimate tool if there is no other way.