

European CSR news for the postal sector

POST EUROPE
YOUR LINK TO POSTAL EXPERTISE

When social dialogue supports transformation

A joint Declaration on the role of social dialogue in the transformation was signed during the European Social Dialogue Committee (SDC) for the postal sector annual Plenary meeting on 1 December. It concludes the project "Mobilising social partners in a new context" which studied the collective labor agreements signed within 16 postal operators. The declaration underlines that the postal sector has experienced during the last years a broad transformation which has had important social consequences varying amongst countries, in particular in terms of employment and competences. In this context, the success of the postal transformation was facilitated by the involvement of social partners at all levels.

A broad range of measures depending on the strategy and stage of transformation

The project has shown that numerous collective labour agreements are signed and cover a wide range of measures such as employment, working conditions, wages as well as employees' status. These measures have been used diversely and to different extents by postal operators and trade unions and result from trade-offs. The agreements depend on the stage of the operators' transformation and their overall strategy. They set concrete measures as well as follow-up measures to ensure their implementation. Eventually the project has observed that there is a real need for raising the awareness of social partners on new activities in the sector, in particular digital and e-commerce services.

A quality social dialogue at all levels with an adequate follow-up

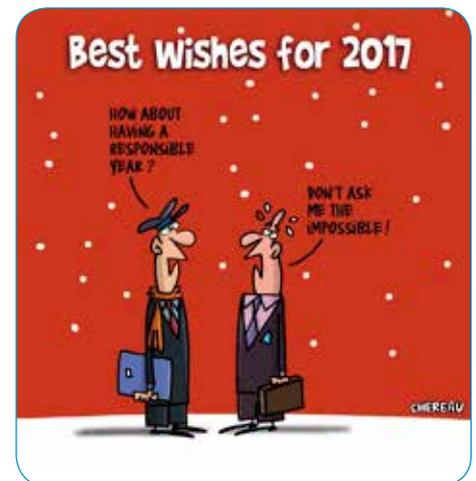
The European social partners highlight that in such a labour-intensive sector, social dialogue is an important element of the transformation process and should occur at all levels. It should take into consideration the interests of all stakeholders to arrive at the right balance between competitiveness, increased flexibility and good working conditions. The Committee considers it as important that social partners are well informed of the evolution of activities and the strategy of postal operators with an adequate follow-up of their impact in terms of jobs and skills. Eventually the declaration underlines the importance of maintaining the competences of social partners on the development of new services and invites all stakeholders to use the tools, in particular the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), created in the framework of the SDC project*.

Lastly, the European social partners underline that they will further monitor the main social evolutions in the sector, observe the social impact of the operators' diversification and of new services' development and analyse related changes in skills and jobs to accompany in a socially responsible way the postal transformation.

New nominations at the European Social Dialogue Committee

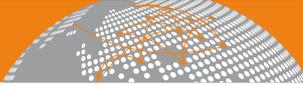
At the occasion of the Plenary were also designated the new Chair of the SDC: Jutta Rawe-Bäumer from Deutsche Post DHL as well as the Vice-President Brian Scott from the trade union Unite.

* The MOOC is available on the SDC website: www.postsocialdialog.eu/MOOC



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EU & you



The European Commission presents its Work Programme

2017 will be the year that both Europe's pillar of social rights and new regulations on work life balance are defined.

This "Pillar of Social Rights" defines a certain number of key principles in order to guarantee smooth functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems within the Eurozone. Presented as putting the social dimension of European integration back to its rightful place, the initiative is currently undergoing public consultation launched by the Commission.

Furthermore, the European Commission plans three legislative initiatives. It intends to

revise the maternity leave directive in a bid to extend the period of time during which young and expectant mothers can receive protection from redundancy and to prohibit any preparatory redundancy measures being undertaken during these protection periods. The European Commission will also either put forward a paternity leave directive or revise parental leave legislation, paying particular attention to clarifying the flexibility of any leave conditions (full time, part time, as a single event or spread over time). Finally, the European Commission evoked the introduction of leave time for caregivers so as to allow employees care for close family members.



Positive assessment for the youth unemployment initiatives

The Youth Guarantee initiative has contributed to the battle against unemployment among the under 25s. This is the conclusion from a European Commission progress report published on 4 October.

In 2013, the EU Member States committed to offering all young people under 25 the opportunity to access professional careers by the offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education within four months after they have left formal education or become unemployed. This initiative, called the 'Youth Guarantee' is being implemented via national action plans that set out structural reforms aimed at improving the transition from education to employment but also via immediate youth employment support measures. According to the European Commission the Youth Guarantee has impacted nine million youths since 2014,

and two-thirds of these (70.2%) have received job offers. The report also states that 35.5% of youths exiting the initiative in 2015 found employment or took up further studies. Numbers vary depending on country and range from 71.4% for Ireland and 64.1% for Italy, to 34.4% for Spain, and 30.4% for Hungary.

The European Commission goes even further to argue that the Youth Guarantee has contributed to EU Member State policy changes and structural reforms. It maintains that this instrument has facilitated new partnerships springing up, supported apprenticeship reforms, improved regulations on traineeships, bolstered the Public Employment Services, and has been able to reach more youths not registered with these services. On the basis of these results, Brussels will allocate an extra one billion euros to battle youth unemployment during the 2017-2020 period.



Insurance, a joint declaration on digitalisation

The declaration, signed by the sector's social partners on 12 October, sets out ways to best manage the effects of digitalisation in the economy and harness the opportunities it offers.

According to the signatories, UNI Europa from the trade unions and Insurance Europe, AMICE (mutual insurers) and BIPAR (insurance intermediaries) from the employers, digitalisation must lead to more flexibility, in terms of "open-mindedness, agility, and resilience in the workplace", as well as to more "specialisation". The social partners also recognise that existing labor law "provides a good basis for the digitalised working world", and that both social dialogue and collective bargaining are, more than ever, the most appropriate means of managing the changes taking place.

The signatories agree that companies need to intensify staff training so employees acquire digital related competences. New consumer expectations in terms of service availability have increasingly impacted working hours and workplaces and are blurring the lines between people's work lives and private lives. Collective bargaining is seen as a means of taking into account consumer, worker, and employer expectations. It is also more important than ever to gauge the impact on health and safety in the workplace and on levels of stress so that the challenge of worker availability in the digital world is managed in a positive manner.





European Posts



An agreement at La Poste on youths and seniors employment

On 3 October, La Poste France together with the trade union organisations secured an agreement based on a cross-generational study that was presented to the social partners in May 2016. The agreement comes at an opportune time in view of the postal operator's particular demographic composition. It forecasts that by the end of 2018 La Poste will have hired 3,000 under 30s on permanent employment contracts representing at least 60% of the 5,000 recruitments under such contracts. Youths under an apprenticeship programme within La Poste or already employed on temporary employment contracts will take priority in terms of job offers. The agreement also intends to recruit 12,000 work-study participants on apprenticeships and professional training as well as 100 disabled participants over the duration of the agreement. In addition at least 15,000 interns will be 'on-boarded'. The 'on-boarding' policy for new hires includes accommoda-

tion assistance both in terms of rentals and homeownership.

As regards employing seniors, the agreement's signatories set the goal that at least 3% of permanent employment contracts would comprise employees over 50 years of age. La Poste is also committed to a 30% of headcount employment rate target for the over 55s by the end of 2018. Added to these commitments are others on occupational development. Thus the postal operator 'wishes that each postal worker can enjoy at least one promotion during his/her career.' Finally, the agreement contains provisions over senior teleworking, overtime solely on a voluntary basis for the over 55s that have undergone arduous working conditions, and efforts to shorten distances between work and home for older postal workers. Eventually, La Poste renews the 2016 part-time disposal for seniors.



Poste Italiane together with the social partners mobilise after the earthquake

Following the 7 September earthquake, which hit the center of the country, Italy's postal operator and the unions have signed an agreement over initiatives for helping and assisting both affected employees and citizens. The text intends for the group's employees to be able to 'give an ethics hour' in assistance to those affected to a dedicated fund. Poste Italiane has agreed to match the monetary equivalent of the employees' hours' donations to this fund.

Moreover employee victims of the quake can request that a portion of their company funded retirement savings be released. In addition Poste Italiane has committed to setting out the best arrangements for both taking into account the number of days certain post offices will not be in a position to service customers, when adjusting the group's objectives, and assessing the impact of certain employees not actually being in a position to attain their own personal objectives and receive the concomitant bonuses as a result of the quake. Group reorganisation moves that had been foreseen for the area hit are now suspended.

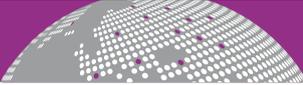


bpost : new collective labor agreement ensures employment until end 2017

On 30 September, unions and management at Belgium's postal operator, bpost unanimously agreed a new collective labor agreement (CLA) that covers the period 2016-2017. In it is a jobs guarantee until 2017 with the company committing to both avoiding making non-statutory personnel (contractual personnel and auxiliary delivery agents) redundant on restructuring grounds, and putting everything in place to safeguard all employees acquired rights, should any privatisation occur during the period of the agreement. The agreement also contains a commitment to ensure newly recruited auxiliary staff receives the appropriate training by providing the necessary resources and monitoring on-going staff training.

In addition, bpost committed to continuing prioritising full time employment for all. In a bid to encourage mobility, the social partners also agreed to put generous conditions forward to employees (statutory and contract based) who accept a lower level job by 2022, with any negative effects on salary and career being fully offset up until that date. Moreover, statutory employees within a specific category, who are affected by restructuring and voluntarily choose to work in the delivery, collection, and preparation services before 2018, will keep their former pay. The new CLA also includes significant measures to boost purchasing power, including raising the value of 'luncheon vouchers', a higher end-of-year bonus, and better travel cost reimbursements.





News from member States



United Kingdom:

legal ruling on Uber driver salaries

On 28 October, a London employment tribunal ruled that drivers who operate via Uber should be considered as employees and enjoy rights such as paid holidays, minimum pay, sick pay and paid break times. The ruling, which was passed after two drivers brought a complaint this summer, indicates that Uber had been in the wrong by considering its drivers as independent workers. The Uber drivers' working time starts as soon as they are within their territory, have the App switched on and are ready and willing to accept trips and it ends as soon as one or more of those conditions ceases to apply, the ruling outlined, arguing in fact that the drivers are being treated as captive employees.

More than 30,000 British drivers could well benefit from the ruling, according to calculations from the UK's third largest union, the GMB. The trade union assisted in bringing the case and is now riding the wave of an "historic victory", and is calling on all British people operating in the gig economy (online platform based alternative employment arrangements) to sign up to a union. In an internal email, Uber has assured its drivers they are not affected by the legal ruling.



Measures to boost worker mobility in Romania

It has become increasingly difficult for companies to find workers in the developed regions of western and central Romania, while poor areas in the east and some of the southern counties have high unemployment and are being shunned by investors due to poor infrastructure. Currently, work related relocation is rare within Romania, with workers are far more likely to leave the country to find a better-paid job in another country of the European Union, than to move within its borders.

In a bid to surmount the obstacles to internal worker mobility the government will introduce a generous system of support. Registered unemployed who agree to relocate more than 50 kilometers away for a permanent employment contract will receive 12,500 RON (€2,850 approx.), a significant amount in Romania. Those who relocate with their entire families will receive a larger amount. The ordinance also introduces travel benefits for those commuting more than 15 km per day. They will receive 0.5 RON (€0.11) per km.



Germany: a new law against abuses of temporary employment

Adopted on 21 October, this new law aims to limit abuses in the area of temporary employment without actually snuffing out this form of employment, which the legislator argues plays a real role in offering the unemployed access to the labor market. In the future workers on interim employment contracts for eighteen consecutive months with the same company and performing the same job will have to be hired on permanent employment contracts. The eighteen-month period may be extended but only under a branch level collective agreement. Pay equality (between permanent and interim

employees) will be mandatory after nine months in the job as compared with twelve months previously, although some exceptions can apply. Using interim workers as a means of breaking a strike is now prohibited. Thus companies can only hire interim staff if these workers are not carrying out tasks normally undertaken by striking staff. Furthermore, works councils will have new rights to information on the number of interim workers as well as on the number of independent workers with service provision contracts so that they can have a better grasp of a company's employment policies.

AGENDA

- 17 March 2017: Management board of PostEurop
- 7 March 2017: European Social Dialogue Committee meeting, Brussels

