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The ceremony celebrating the anniversary last May focused on the question: how relevant today is the first social encyclical Rerum Novarum, published by Pope Leo XIII in 1891? *Page 3*

EDITORIAL



Dear Friends,

Now the Hungarian presidency of the EU Council is over, the politicians responsible are taking stock. In my opinion the Hungarians succeeded in their ambitious project of giving enough impetus in the first half of 2011 to the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy: they linked the aim of combating poverty with a major problem in their region. They presented a broad strategy for integrating the Roma, which was discussed in the Council of Justice and Home Affairs, Employment and Social Policy, Education and Culture as well as in the General Affairs Council. Every

member state has now been called on to submit its plans by the end of 2011. It is Commissioner László Andor's hope that there will already be tangible results half way through the strategy. Just the notion that every member state is working on the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy is an exciting challenge for EZA in the next few years, a call to help shape the future.

In our view the Polish presidency of the EU Council can also be interesting, for instance with regard to a reform of the European Economic and Monetary Union and stronger integration of the Balkans. But so far I have not seen any signs of integrative employment policy measures. The logo borrowed from Solidarność is a good choice. It is supposed to express the common spirit of dynamism, positive energy and solidarity – but were they thinking of the workers' interests as well?

*Yours,
Roswitha Gottbehüt
Secretary General*

USO Education and Training Course in Madrid

Since 2009 EZA, in cooperation with its member centres FIDESTRA (Portugal), Fondazione Luigi Clerici (Italy), USO (Spain) and EDS-Nowy Staw (Poland), has been implementing a programme of education and training courses for company workers' representatives (as reported in EZA News 1/2011). After FIDESTRA (in 2009) and the Fondazione Luigi Clerici (2010), the Spanish trade union USO's Education and Training Department headed by Joaquín Pérez hosted the third course, which ran in May this year in Madrid. Prof. Javier Morillas and his colleagues from the University of San Pablo were responsible for the academic side of the course. The key issues were leadership responsibility, labour law reforms and the job markets in Europe, survey methods,

the development of the European social dialogue, company start-ups, charring meetings and time management, and the tax system for workers and employers.

In their concluding assessment after seven days packed with content and work, every one of the 25 participants from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Poland and Latvia was highly satisfied with the outstanding academic level of the lectures, the participatory design of the training units and the excellent facilities, adding that they had taken on board a great deal for their future work. There is a brief report on the EZA website.

The next courses in the series will be run in Warsaw this October and in Portugal next year. An online course will complete the cycle. ■

EZA Special Project on the "Europe 2020" Strategy

The conference organised by the NSZZ "Solidarność" trade union in Gdansk for the first weekend in March kicked off EZA's Special Project on the "Europe 2020" Strategy (as we reported in EZA News 1/2011). Since then seven of the scheduled eleven seminars have been held – so it is time for our first interim report.

The key question from the outset was how the member states of the EU could achieve the first headline target of the "Europe 2020" Strategy, to have 75% of people aged between 20 and 64 in employment by 2020, and what part the workers' organisations could play in this. In view of the drastic spread of the euro crisis in recent weeks and its impact on job markets, doubts were raised in several seminars as to whether the target of a 75% employment rate could really be achieved by 2020. The seminar-goers were agreed that the core challenge was to create not only more jobs but also better jobs; this was regarded as the most important task for the workers' organisations in implementing the strategy.

As shown by the joint HIVA and EZA research paper presented in six seminars, more and better jobs are not mutually exclusive. In those European countries where there is already a high level of employment, the quality of work is mani-



festly better than in the states whose labour markets feature a high level of unemployment and a large number of precarious jobs. This applies to the time before the crisis just as it does today.

But does the crisis really have sole responsibility for mass unemployment and precarious jobs? Some workers' organisations voiced the suspicion that sometimes employers put forward the crisis as justification for excusing redundancies already planned before the crisis.

The impact of poor quality of working conditions on society is serious. Precarious jobs result firstly in a heavy burden on social security systems, as they are generally not associated with payments into health and pension funds, and secondly in a growing number of "working poor" who work but are still so poor that they are reliant on state hand-outs.

The introduction of a decent minimum wage in every nation and sector, the limiting of "mini-jobs" and involuntary part-time jobs, making it easier to move from a part-time to a full-time job and promoting as many open-ended contracts of

employment as possible, are the fundamental elements for a widespread improvement in quality of work and at the same time an effective measure for reducing poverty, one of the headline targets of the "Europe 2020" Strategy.

EZA has set up a website on the "Europe 2020" Strategy providing information on the latest status of our special project:

<http://www.eza.org/de/projekte/eza-grossprojekt-zur-strategie-europa-2020.html>

EZA is glad to receive feedback at klein@eza.org. ■

ILO Convention on Labour Standards for Domestic Workers

On 16 June 2011, a large majority of the delegates at the 100th ILO Conference in Geneva adopted a Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, who make up about 2.5% of the total workforce in Western industrialised nations. They often work in extremely hard conditions and to some extent are exploited and have their human rights violated. The convention is a historic step, because for the first time the ILO system of standards is being introduced into a segment of the informal sector, as emphasised by ILO Director-General Juan Somavia. The convention was organised by an alliance of domestic workers' organisations, the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN), the International Union of Food (IUF) workers, human rights', church and self-help organisations. The



German Commission for Justice and Peace with Dr. Hildegard Hagemann assisted this process with a series of seminars, some of them in conjunction with the IDWN and the ETUC. The initiative was also presented at the joint seminar of EZA, the Nell-Breuning-Haus and the European Trade Union Institute in the last project year.

For further information on this subject go to:

ILO:

http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100th/Session/media-centre/press-releases/WCMS_157891/lang-en/index.htm

IDWN:

<http://en.domesticworkerrights.org/?q=node/206>

German Commission for Justice and Peace:

http://www.justitia-et-pax.de/16062011_Hausangestellte.pdf ■

EZA President Bartho Pronk receives Order of Merit



Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Bartho Pronk, EZA President, Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the EU Commission and EU Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship (from left to right)

During a ceremony on 17 May 2011, the EZA President Bartho Pronk was awarded the Order of Merit of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Jean-Claude Juncker, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, presented the Order in the residency of Luxembourg's Permanent Representative at the EU, honouring Pronk for his efforts to emphasize the social dimension of the European project while working as an MEP in the European Parliament and later as an advisor in the Cabinet of EU Commissioner Viviane Reding.

The member organizations of EZA and the Secretariat send their warmly congratulations!

120 Years of Rerum Novarum, and the EU

Ketteler's social message has lost none of its topicality: we must not turn a blind eye to serious social injustices in our time", said Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg and patron of "Friends of EZA".

The Bishop of Mainz, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, who would have been 200 years old this year, was one of the figures that had a decisive influence on discussion of the social issue in Germany. Apart from him, at the end of the 19th century there were many in Europe committed to social issues – and not just in Catholic countries.

Then with the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which contains the ideas of many socially engaged Christians, Pope Leo XIII

created the crucial basis for those ideas to be spread worldwide.

EZA's work is founded on this body of thought as a vital factor in achieving the aims of its education and training work. That is why EZA intends to highlight the issue in 2011 and beyond with the help of "Friends of EZA".

The plan is to illustrate, in special publications of "EZA News", the starting point of the Christian social doctrine in the countries of Europe. Those that provided the impetus for observing the doctrine in their country are to be named, their influence on the national society explained, and the aim is to draw conclusions from this for the European level.

Joachim Herudek ■

60th Anniversary of the FCG (Group of Christian Trade Unionists) in Austria

The focus of the ceremony last May was on the question: how relevant today is the first social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, published by Pope Leo XIII in 1891? According to Fritz Neugebauer, President of the National Council and Chairman of EZA-Plus, the encyclical, regarded the world over as the foundation stone for the Christian social doctrine and the creation of Christian trade unions, was at once old and with its principles new and contemporary. ÖGB (Austrian Trade Union Confederation) Vice-President and EZA Treasurer Dr. Norbert Schnedl said that globalisation

had to be something that everyone could experience as positive. In this process, he went on, the key focus was not on the economy or financial capital but on the wellbeing of mankind as a whole. EZA President Raf Chanterie recalled that *Rerum Novarum* turned the social issue of the church into a socio-political concern and called upon those in positions of responsibility to live up to their duties. ■

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