



NEWS

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR WORKERS' QUESTIONS • NO. 2 / 2015

OVERVIEW

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Under the supervision of the Nell-Breuning-Haus (NBH, Germany), in conjunction with AFB (South Tyrol/ Italy), ETÖK (Estonia), EDS-FNS (Poland) and other partners, the EZA is conducting a project on the subject of "The world of work in 2020 – psychosocial consequences of the structural change of work in a European comparison – efficient instruments for salutogenesis in companies and organisations operating in geriatric care and nursing"

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■ Projects co-ordinated in 2015

In the 2015 education and training year the EZA education and training programme has three blocks of co-ordinated projects on the topics of "Successful social dialogue in Europe – criteria, values and implementation", "Effective vocational basic and further training as an important task for workers' organisations" and "New challenges for health and safety at work"

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EDITORIAL



Dear Friends,

I wish to take leave of you in this issue of EZA News as Secretary-General of the EZA after 13 years of interesting and meaningful work. Sigrid Schraml took over from me on 1 May 2015. "Meaningful" is a wonderful expression for when you can live out your own inner conviction. This was the case during my work for the EZA – and more: it was reflected by many people I met through our Christian-social education and training work. My conviction has always been that with its mission and with many committed fellow campaigners – now 70 workers' organisations in 27 European countries – the EZA can champion greater social justice in Europe loudly

and clearly. We now have a solid foundation that embodies the principles of human dignity, subsidiarity and solidarity, and takes its demands to the top of the political process. This is an ongoing mission that is still to be developed and also calls for staying power in the future.

In my time I have seen the Eastern enlargement of the EU and in recent years also the opening up to many countries in the Western Balkans, where the EZA is now well represented. Both have been good opportunities for the EZA to strengthen the social dialogue in Europe.

Altogether I had the opportunity to play a part over 26 years in developing and strengthening the EZA. I wish to thank everyone today for their co-operation and friendship: the member organisations, the different bodies, those responsible in the European Parliament and in the European Commission – but first and foremost my colleagues in the secretariat who breathe life into the EZA, day in day out. I likewise wish you, dear Sigrid, a meaningful time as Secretary-General.

*Yours,
Roswitha Gottbehüt*

Sigrid Schraml new Secretary-General

Sigrid Schraml became the new EZA Secretary-General on 1 May 2015. Before that, the certified intercultural consultant (specialising in Central Eastern Europe) worked for seven-and-a-half years as a specialist adviser to the Secretariat General of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK), where as Director she was responsible for "European co-operation and intercultural questions" and the discussion group "Christians and Muslims in the ZdK". In her second period of office she was also Chair of the Employee Representation Committee.

Sigrid Schraml started her career in 1994 in what was then the European Commission's Directorate General III – Industry, and then in 1995 she joined the

European Parliament: firstly in the secretariat of the EPP party; in 2000 in the Secretariat of the Committee on Development and Co-operation. From 2005 to 2007 she worked for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Warsaw, where her responsibilities included co-ordinating and implementing the Belarus national programme and political education work and political reporting on Poland and Belarus.

For some members of the EZA network Sigrid Schraml is not a new face, as during her previous activities there were repeatedly points of contact with the EZA's work.

In the spotlight: Sigrid Schraml, Secretary-General of the EZA since 1 May 2015

Question: *Up until now, you worked as a specialist adviser to the Secretariat General of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) and as Director you were responsible for “European co-operation and intercultural questions” and the discussion group “Christians and Muslims in the ZdK”. What experience from that line of work and/or from your previous activities can you contribute to your new office?*



Sigrid Schraml, new EZA Secretary-General

Answer: The thread running through my entire career so far is a fascination with Europe and addressing European matters. Through my work in the European Commission and in the EPP party in the European Parliament in Brussels I became familiar with the EU institutions and their processes from the inside. At the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Poland and in the last few years at the ZdK I was involved with Europe from the pre-political sphere. There the focus was on international co-operation with partner organisations and political lobbying. Being familiar with both perspectives is a great bonus for my current work at the EZA.

Through my time in France, Belgium and Poland, and the many years of European networking, I have acquired language skills and also a feeling for intercultural and interreligious questions, which are an asset here.

I am most grateful that in recent years I have had the opportunity to engage with the Christian-Islamic dialogue. As the EZA is involved through its special project in the Western Balkans and also therefore in predominantly Muslim countries, my experience in the interreligious dialogue can also be of use here.

Lastly, besides my personal belief I bring with me the conviction that the Christian social doctrine – although it undoubtedly has to carry on developing – is still significant for us today in our drive for a successful social market economy.

Question: *At the meeting of the EZA’s Council on 29 November last year you were elected Secretary-General of the EZA and began your period of office on 1 May 2015. How do you feel now?*

Answer: More than anything I feel glad. I look forward to gradually getting to know the members, and together with them and the staff of the Secretariat advancing the social dialogue. Of course I also feel a healthy respect for the duties that await me. But thanks to the trust placed in me by the Presidium, the Council and many others, I have high hopes for what lies ahead of me, ahead of us together.

Question: *For some members of the EZA network you are not a new face. What do you appreciate from your previous knowledge of the EZA? And what for you are the key challenges facing the EZA today, to enable it to continue playing an important role in Europe in future?*

Answer: One of the EZA’s fundamental strength as a European network is the connection between people from the different regions of Europe. I am convinced that this is the EZA’s contribution to inner-European cohesion. In my opinion this is still an achievement that is not to be underestimated or neglected.

The European debt and economic crisis has indeed had a drastic impact, but before it there was already social inequality that is incompatible with the values which the EU champions. By enabling its members to acquire qualifications, the EZA helps create a social and fair Europe.

For the EZA to achieve its goals in the best possible way, from my experience the challenges include the following: strengthening co-operation among members, further developing the education and training work, the question of the value of the social dialogue and of workers’ organisations in society.

Question: *When one begins a new job one is full of energy, new ideas and creative drive. Is there anything about the EZA you would like to change?*

Answer: I will be able to input new, different views, notions and ideas into the existing structure. This is what I demand of myself. The excitement of meeting expectations, appreciating what is already in place, and at the same time discovering and using potential and in this way developing the EZA with the people on the spot, will certainly define the first few months of my work.

Before I come up with concrete proposals for change, though, I first want to get to know the EZA better from the inside.

Question: *Lastly: What are you looking forward to the most?*

Answer: Making with my work for the EZA a small contribution to a Europe that its citizens can be proud of.

Questions: Victoria Znined ■

Erasmus Plus project: better working conditions for the lasting psychosocial health of nursing staff and carers

Because of the ageing societies in Europe, a question for the future will be how care for the elderly can be best organised. In some countries this concern has already become acute: there is a shortage of nursing staff and carers. The cause of this is the tough working conditions they often face.

That is why under the lead of the Nell-Breuning-Haus from Herzogenrath/Germany the idea was developed to draw up an education and training concept for care workers, with the aim of producing health-promoting knowledge among them. The prime objective is to prevent the psychosocial health risks associated with care work and nursing. Work on this issue was begun in September 2014 in conjunction with EZA's partners AFB, ETÖK, EDS-FNS, and EZA itself. Such an education and training concept is currently being drawn up as part of the Erasmus Plus project entitled "The world of work 2020 – psychosocial consequences of the structural change of work in a European comparison – efficient

instruments for salutogenesis in companies and organisations operating in geriatric care and nursing". It is to be used in future not only on the job but also as part of the initial vocational training of nursing staff and carers. In addition to the partners referred to, others from Belgium, Germany and Romania are also involved. To cater for the reality of work and meet the requirements, nurses and care workers in their institutions are to be surveyed in a questionnaire on the psychosocial stresses they face. From the need thus ascertained, a suitable education and training concept will be drawn up and tested with nurses and carers in the project partners' countries.

It is evident that education and training alone cannot eradicate the many diverse psychosocial stresses of nursing and caring. That is why in the two-year work phase recommendations will also be drawn up for the social partners and policy-makers in Europe, to enable nurses and carers to retain their psychosocial health permanently and to work as long



Rainer Rissmayer, Nell-Breuning-Haus (NBH), Project Manager

and as happily as possible in this occupation that is so vital to society.

More informations:

www.arbeitswelt2020.eu

Norbert Klein ■

Co-ordinating projects in the EZA education and training programme 2015

In its education and training work, the EZA's main concern is that education and training activities carried out by the member centres as part of the "European Social Dialogue" education and training programme are not isolated, but are connected to overriding topics in terms of content and interlinked. In this way, 34 education and training activities – 45% of the entire education and training programme – are linked thematically, including in the following three project co-ordinations:

- How important criteria, values and their implementation are for a successful social dialogue in Europe, and what significance Christian-social values have in this, is to be discussed in a project co-ordination, based in terms of content on previous years' activities, which is to incorporate the results of the recently completed EZA/HIVA study on "Conditions and criteria for social dialogue in Europe – the workers' perspective". ACV-BIE, C.F.T.L., EUROFEDOP, MCL/EFAL and Recht en

Pflicht will be involved in co-ordinating the projects under the supervision of Volker Scharlowsky (Sozialwissenschaftliche Studien Berlin – Social Science Studies), and they will include discussion of the strategy of the new European Commission and its President Jean-Claude Juncker on "Reviving the social dialogue in Europe".

- Following a large seminar in Berlin in February 2013, under the supervision of ÖZA the EZA set up a standing work group on "Vocational Training", which met in Vienna, Thessaloniki and Madrid, and has now submitted its concluding results. The question of what contribution good vocational training could make to reducing youth unemployment in Europe was also the focus of a series of seminars held in the 2014 education and training year on the "Europe 2020" strategy, involving 22 member centres supplemented by an academic research report from the Institute of Advanced Studies (HIS) Vienna. The results of these activi-

ties are being incorporated and continued in a block of projects co-ordinated by Helmut Skala, Vienna, on the topic of "Effective vocational basic and further training as an important task for workers' organisations". ETÖK, FIDESTRA, CEAT, ÖZA, NowyStaw and N.Si. are involved.

- EZA member centres have already been following the developments in "Health and safety at work" for many years now in their education and training activities. In the projects being co-ordinated this year they will be discussing new challenges and strategies for preventing harassment and bullying at work, particular risks for women, health and safety in labour legislation, and job satisfaction. The project co-ordination involves Krifa, LDF Education Center, MOSZ, NBH and UNASM; the project co-ordinator is António Brandão Guedes of C.F.T.L. Portugal.

Matthias Homey ■

EZA's networks and platforms

International Platform of Co-operation and Migration (IPCM)

The IPCM is an offshoot of the EZA. In fact the EZA realised that several of its members were involved in issues related to the mobility of workers and their families and were giving special attention to migration phenomena. At the same time, other members were working on international co-operation projects for development. So a group of EZA members decided in 2004 to start up this platform. In 2009 it was constituted as a legal entity in the form of an association.

We have had training seminars and meetings in Brussels, Naples, Palermo, Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Toledo, Valladolid, Lisbon, Amarante, Guimarães, Évora and Malta. The topics have included: "The labour market and migration in the EU: How to put an end to the social exclusion of migrants? The role of trade unions and migrants' organisations in the processes of integration" in 2014; "The economic and social crisis, its impact on the labour market in the EU: an analysis of the current situation, forecasts for development, political and legal requirements for a framework conducive to creating jobs for migrants and local people" in 2013; and the "Participation of immigrants in the social dialogue and in the labour market" in 2012.

So we aim firstly to offer training, courses and an exchange of experience and knowledge between members of the

IPCM; and secondly to speak with a common voice to society, starting from our principles as social organisations based on Christian humanism, which leads us to seek a way of alleviating the suffering of millions of people in the world.

Today, 22 organisations make up the IPCM, as full members or observers. They come from Spain, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Germany, Romania, Albania, the Netherlands and Chile. The EZA is a member of the IPCM. Some members of the IPCM are also members of the EZA, others are not. The IPCM is receptive to applications to join it from organisations that share our working approach and our principles. The head office of the IPCM is in Madrid and it is subject to Spanish law. The Fundación Humanismo y Democracia (H+D) is responsible for its technical secretariat.

The IPCM is funded by membership fees and the grants it receives from, for instance, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation. In some seminars, delegations of the European Commission have made their facilities and other services available.

The IPCM is a network whose mission is to unite with organisations committed to human dignity, social and cultural integration and human values.

Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga ■



PICM
Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga,
presidente
Plaza de las Cortes nº 4, 4
izquierda
E - 28014 Madrid
Tel.: +34 914350629
e-mail: info@picomi.org
Internet: www.picomi.org

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EZA
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Questions
Johannes-Albers-Allee 2
53639 Königswinter
Tel. +49 - 22 23 - 29 98 - 0
Fax +49 - 22 23 - 29 98 - 22
E-mail: eza@eza.org
www.eza.org

Editorial team

Roswitha Gottbehüt (editor-in-chief),
Matthias Homey, Norbert Klein,
Victoria Znined

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HellaDesign, Emmendingen
E-mail: helladesign@web.de

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