

OVERVIEW

■ EZA kick-off seminar “Priorities of the European Social Dialogue” in Marseille



Focal topics of the 2017 education and training activities: “The European Pillar of Social Rights”, “Integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market – the role of workers’ organisations”, “Digital world of work – technological developments and changes at the workplace” and “The impact of the digital world of work on the lives of workers and their families – socio-ethical considerations”

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*The EZA wishes you a blessed Christmas
and a happy 2017!*

EZA, Official Campaign Partner of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Healthy Workplaces for all Ages” is the title of the campaign 2016/2017 of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), whose official partner the European Centre for Workers’ Questions (EZA) became in November 2016. More than 100 partners across Europe – workers’ and employers’ associations, European and international companies, as well as non-governmental organizations - are committed to the campaign, which focuses on the sustainability of the working life with regard to the aging working pop-

ulation in Europe. The campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of a good health and safety management and the prevention of risks at work, throughout the working life, as well as through a work aligned with the abilities of the individual - be it at the beginning or the end of the working life. You can find more information on the [web site of the campaign](#).

Victoria Znined ■

The European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA) kick-off seminar in Marseille



Participants at the EZA kick-off seminar in Marseille, December 2016

What importance do values have for workers' organisations in a Europe thrown together from the most diverse countries with the most diverse cultures? That was a key question at the EZA kick-off seminar held in Marseille, France, from 1 to 2 December 2016, organised in conjunction with the CFTC (Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens) and with the support of the European Union.

110 representatives of Christian-social workers' organisations from 25 European countries gathered to exchange ideas on this question and on the key topics of the EZA 2017 education and training programme.

Discussion of values

In a panel discussion, Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, the ILO special adviser on socio-religious questions, was convinced that the long-term promotion of workers' interests could only succeed if workers' organisations based their actions on a solid foundation of values. In this context he referred to the various social encyclicals. CFTC Vice-President Joseph Thouvenel stressed that there was an important correlation between human dignity and a fair wage. Moreover, workers should not be reduced to the worth of their labour. He also drew attention to activities like voluntary work, raising children and fam-

ily care work, which, although indispensable for society's social cohesion, were unpaid.

The discussion on this issue was whether a society in which not everyone had to work any more but everyone could live a decent life, was conceivable; i.e. the question of a new economic and social model, e.g. based on an unconditional basic income.

The President of the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW), Sarah Prenger, addressed the often considerable egoism of those that have a job, the careers of especially young people characterised by gaps in employment, and the huge imbalance between owners of capital and those who create it for them. She warned against a social conflict in Europe between those who are in work and those who are out of work, and referred to the threat from rising radical movements in Europe.

There was agreement in the discussion that the social dialogue had to be strengthened and to include those who had no voice, such as the many sole self-employed exposed to increasingly tough competition due to growing globalisation and digitisation. That is why the seminar-goers called for greater reliability and security in labour relations.

The European Union had to ask itself why it had failed to create social equality throughout the EU.

EZA 2017 education and training programme

According to Matthias Homey, a member of the EZA's academic staff, an important feature of the 2017 education and training programme is the intensified thematic interlinking of the education and training activities. A cornerstone of this will be the series of seminars on strategies of European institutions, in which the projects on the priority of the "European Pillar of Social Rights" will receive academic assistance. In addition, 2017 will see projects coordinated on the topics of "Integration of migrants and refugees in the labour market – the role of workers' organisations", "Digital world of work – technological developments and changes in the workplace", and "The impact of the digital world of work on the lives of workers and their families – socio-ethical considerations".

Social dialogue in Europe

David-Pascal Dion, Head of Unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, informed the participants of the current status of and prospects for social dialogue in Europe. He explained the ongoing consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights and underlined the importance of strong, independent workers' organisations. In this respect he said the EZA had great responsibility in educating and training its member centres, to enable them to carry out this task. Being able to negotiate on an even footing was the precondition for good results. A European legal framework also had to be drawn up in which individual rights were strengthened, for instance those of workers not represented by the social partners.

In view of the fact that the social dialogue in several European countries is under severe pressure, the European Commission was called on in the discussion to exert the necessary pressure to lend assis-

tance. It was felt the “Juncker Commission” offered the opportunity for a new start. Faced with the current problems in Europe, workers’ organisations had a special responsibility and had to be strengthened by the European Commission. Dion emphasised that the Commission had included the social dialogue in the European Semester and the respective country reports.

Thematic visit and Agora

During a thematic visit to Airbus Helicopters, the seminar-goers found out about

the production conditions and discussed today’s challenges with a representative of the works council.

The EZA network platforms on the issues of education and training, migration, equality and young workers had the opportunity to present their work at an agora. The results of an Erasmus+ project on “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”, in

which the EZA was involved, were also presented.

As the EZA has also been a partner of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work’s current campaign “Healthy Workplaces for All Ages” since November 2016, this was likewise presented in the agora.

Norbert Klein and Victoria Zined ■

Green jobs – more space for sustainability and human dignity

Such an economy kills”, Pope Francis complains in his apostolic exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*”. The EZA is not indifferent to these words and regards it as its duty to consider what can be done to reduce the tragic consequences of our economic activity for the environment. In this context the projects coordinated in the 2016/2017 education and training year on “Green jobs”, comprising five seminars, have particular importance.

The issues of the individual seminars

1. “The challenges of the eco-social market economy”, organised by CNV (Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond), Belgrade, April 2016
2. “Sustainable development in the energy sector – creating jobs”, organised by AFB (Arbeiter-, Freizeit- und Bildungsverein), Bressanone, May 2016
3. “Jobs in a green economy – trade union perspective. Social dialogue for green and decent jobs”, organised by NKOS (Nezávislékrestanskéodborny Slovenska), Bratislava, June 2016
4. “Creating skills and jobs for tomorrow’s green economy”, organised by CET (Centre Européen du Travail), Brussels and Namur, June 2016
5. “The solidarity economy – doing business differently in Europe”, organised by KAB Deutschlands (Katholische Arbeitnehmer-Bewegung Deutschlands e.V.), Linz, August/September 2016



Participants in the CNV (Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond) seminar “The challenges of the eco-social market economy” in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, in April 2016

Findings and demands

Green jobs can be understood in two ways: firstly occupations in ecology, and secondly all occupations practised as environmentally-friendly as possible. From the second perspective, every job can become greener in principle. What is important is not only protecting the environment, but also making jobs more decent.

Creating jobs that take both social and ecological components into consideration is an impossible task if we adhere to the values that have so far shaped our activities. That is why it is necessary to consider other economic models.

It should be our task to develop a sustainable economy based on solidarity. To do so, European societies need appropriate values and laws. How we treat one another is bound up with how we treat our environment. We must switch from a civilisation of predatory exploitation to a civilisation of sustainability.

A successful model could be the eco-social market economy, which presupposes a balance between three elements: market economy, ecology, and social engagement or social peace. In this context we have to mention the Global Marshall Plan Initiative, which aims at a global eco-social market economy and which, contrary to fears, could be introduced in every

country – step by step, and making allowance for each country’s particular features.

As our current mindset gives priority to constant economic growth – entailing ever increasing consumption – one way could be a re-orientation towards regional economic activity, with a focus on co-operative economic activity as a counterbalance to big business, whose economic activity often tends to be detrimental to the environment and whose endeavours are generally geared to constant maximisation of profit. Their Corporate Social

Responsibility is often a marketing strategy rather than a social, environmentally friendly and charitable commitment based on business ethics.

Co-operatives could be a way of protecting the environment and the quality of jobs. What would be important here would be the sustainable development of the countryside and of tourism, as well as the development of local, traditional products on a small scale.

To design green jobs, sustainability issues must also be integrated in every occupation. Every occupation must be analysed

in detail, to consider how it can be practised in a more ecological way. The core competencies for a green economy must be identified, analysed, accelerated and created, and workers trained accordingly. On the microcosmic level, each individual can subject his/her own workplace to a “green check”, thus contributing to more ecological and more sustainable awareness in the world of work.

Marta Jędrych, Project Coordinator ■

New in the EZA network: the Ukrainian trade union confederation All-Ukrainian Union of Workers Solidarity Vost “Volya”

Vost “Volya” is a free, democratic trade union confederation in Ukraine active in the fields of education & training, finance, industry and the informal economy. The trade unions that belong to it have been involved on a national level since 1989. The trade union “Volya” was the first cross-sector trade union in Ukraine. The Vost “Volya” head office is in Lviv.

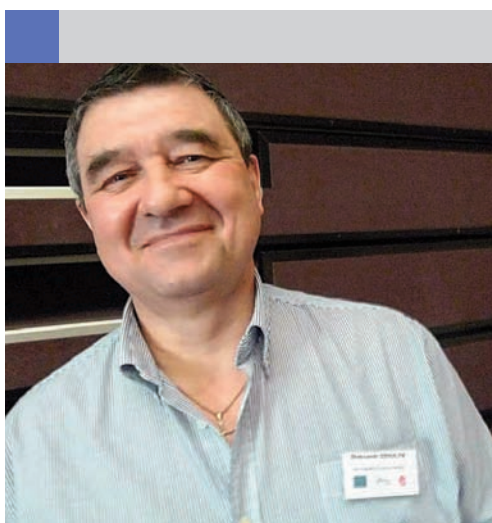
Vost “Volya”, whose activities are based on the universal principles of Christian social doctrine, has a women’s section and a youth section. The trade union confederation is a member of the World Organisation of Workers (WOW, a member of the EZA) and of the International

Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and is also on the ITUC’s Pan-European Regional Council (PERR). Vost “Volya” works closely with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and is a partner in the project “The effectiveness of the labour inspection system and of social dialogue mechanisms is strengthened”, which the ILO is running in Ukraine.

Under the motto “The 21st century – new trade unions”, Vost “Volya” champions reform of the trade unions of Ukraine, decent work for every Ukrainian worker, and strengthening civil society in Ukraine.

At the last EZA Council meeting in November 2016, Vost “Volya” was included in the EZA network as an observer.

Victoria Znined ■



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