



MAGAZINE

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THE TIKTOK CHANNEL



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a Danish trade union reinvents itself

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New employees at EZA introduce themselves

ISSUE 03/2022

Dear Members, Dear Friends,

We held a successful kick-off seminar in Vilnius on 'Solidarity and social peace in troubled times'. Our General Assembly approved the EZA Vision 2030 and discussed how to proceed. Furthermore, a new Council was elected. We have all the inspiration and instruments in our hands to translate our vision into action. The ecological transition, the energy crisis, maintaining the purchasing power of people, ... There are plenty of challenges. Things are not easy, especially at a time when we remain shocked by Russia's brutal war in Ukraine. We must do our best with all the strength of our convictions.

This strength is concentrated at EZA in the diversity of our 70 members in 29 countries who live out their commitment every day. Their efforts include organising seminars to gain better insights, entering into negotiations to reach collective agreements and in actions of solidarity - all against the background of a greatly and rapidly changing globalised world.

I would just like to dwell on this for a moment. Globalisation has of course brought progress, but not everyone has benefited. Fair redistribution is therefore imperative. Global supply chains mean that those who make a contribution no longer know what happens to it or what its added value is. Distance makes the tangibility of a nearby economy abstract and fragmented. The voice of employees and workers is often not loud enough, and they are not sufficiently involved in the overall process. We do not want a new class struggle, but neither can we turn a blind eye to the excesses of capitalism. An eco-social market economy must be the framework that provides an opportunity for fair competition and just transition.

What is the capital at our disposal for this purpose? Capital is often only thought of in financial and economic terms. But to succeed, the human, social, natural, moral, intellectual and institutional capital is at least as important. That is the only way for us to achieve a new, people-oriented balance.

I would like to invite you to reflect and work on this as well. May I take this opportunity already to wish you an inspired new year.

Luc Van den Brande
EZA President



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TRADE UNION 2.0

KRIFA would like to be more than a trade union: the Danes are also focusing on well-being and job satisfaction – which is annoying other trade unions in the country.



INSIDE VIEW OF KRIFA HEADQUARTERS IN AARHUS

TEXT: Lukas Fleischmann
PHOTOS: Lukas Fleischmann

It is the end of October in Aarhus, Denmark's second largest city with a population of just about 300,000 people. Just outside the city limits, the KRIFA headquarters rise up on a small hill. The building is not even ten years old, with architecture that makes it look more like a software company than the headquarters of a trade union. When you enter the building, you find yourself in a bright room designed with lots of wood and even more plants. The reception area is on the left, but there is nobody there in person. Instead, on a video screen a visualised chatbot resembling a woman helps visitors and shows them how to get to where they want to in the building. Around 350 people work here on different floors. Every Monday, they all meet at 9 am in the canteen where they sing songs together and get themselves ready

for the week ahead, followed by an opportunity for individual employees to share their thoughts with all the colleagues. To outsiders, the atmosphere might seem like a mixture of a start-up, a church congregation and social counselling. It seems far removed from the staid, antiquated preconceived ideas associated with some trade unions. KRIFA's philosophy is as modern as the building. "We have found ourselves a new position on the market with a new strategy", says Hans Kargaard Thomsen, who's responsible at KRIFA for marketing the organisation. "In the past, we were always the cheapest trade union. But we want to be more than that. So we have put the membership contributions up and now offer more in the way of service. We want to be active not just when workers have problems: we want to be a companion throughout

their working lives." KRIFA started this transformation process a few years ago in response to shrinking member numbers. As in the rest of the EU, trade unions in Denmark are increasingly under pressure. "At the moment, we are still facing a slight decline, but when all is said and done, we are in the middle of reinventing ourselves", says Hans Kargaard Thomsen.

Reaching millions of people with TikTok

This transformation is taking place on many levels. The union's social media strategy is one successful example of its service-based re-orientation. In this respect, KRIFA has meanwhile assumed a leading role in Denmark, particularly on TikTok, the world's fastest growing social network for the 15-to-30 age bracket. "Reaching this age group is really difficult", says Stine Gregersen, whose team is responsible for the TikTok channel. "You have to realise that many young people don't even know what a trade union is anymore. Many things that were simply unattainable for their parents and that the trade unions had to fight hard for, are taken for granted in Denmark today." In fact, Denmark is one of the countries with the highest developed social welfare system in the world and one of the most egalitarian societies. The Scandinavian country is constantly ranked at the top of international ratings. "Young people in particular often ask why on earth do we still need trade unions", says Stine Gregersen. "But we want to be a companion throughout people's entire working lives, which means contacting young

people at an early point in time. That works really well with TikTok." The idea of the TikTok channel is just as easy as it is successful. On 30-second video clips, young influencers give brief explanations about aspects of labour law, such as regulations for annual leave, or various working hours models. These videos always finish with slogans like "I know that because I follow KRIFA on TikTok" and have been viewed more than 10 million times. Meanwhile, other larger trade unions in the country have started copying this media strategy. "When we see other trade unions adopting our concept one to one, this confirms that our work is going in the right direction", says Stine Gregersen. "And I believe that other trade unions in countries with another language could also adopt our model, just modifying it to their own language".

Copy it or reject it?

On the one hand, other Danish trade unions copy KRIFA's way of using TikTok, while on the other they are highly critical of the new philosophy. The country's largest trade union, 3F, even puts a warning on its website that people should not join KRIFA, claiming that KRIFA is more like a business company than a social organisation. Rolf Weber, political advisor at KRIFA, can only shake his head at this and dismisses the accusation: "We have to make sure that we remain relevant in future, and this means we need to realign ourselves. It does NOT mean that we no longer fulfil our role as a trade union. On the contrary: this role and the work involved still exist. But we must focus on doing much more." His colleague Mette Christiansen adds: "Our Christian tradition points us toward dialogue and collabora-



MONDAY MORNINGS BEGIN AT KRIFA WITH COFFEE AND SINGING TOGETHER



STINE GREGERSEN PRESENTS THE TIKTOK CHANNEL

tion. We believe that it takes consensus to make progress. Many other trade unions that are further to the left on the spectrum don't like this." Denmark's trade union landscape is very left-of-centre. The so-called "Danish model" of social dialogue has established the principles for more than 100 years, with the government keeping out of social dialogue to a great extent. However, if the government should be needed to clarify certain issues, it has the long tradition of only negotiating with organisations that are part of the so-called umbrella organisation. According to tradition, these are the socialist trade unions and the employer associations. "There is a clear democracy deficit here", says Rolf Weber, "because all these organisations of the umbrella association represent around one million workers.

But KRIFA alone has roughly 200,000 members, and if all the other trade unions are taken into account, that brings us to 500,000 people who are not represented in this setup. We're trying to change things, but the traditions are deeply rooted. We are constantly being challenged because

of this." In the foreseeable future, KRIFA sees little chance of breaking through this system and is therefore looking for alternative and additional possibilities of becoming or remaining relevant for members.

A new philosophy

Nikolai Skøtt is one of those sharing responsibility for the new services being provided by KRIFA. Among others, the former deputy school headmaster is in charge of developing new training concepts. In terms of job satisfaction, he says: "Well-being will play an ever increasing role in future. So the question is, do we leave this up to private providers, or do we as a trade union get actively involved? I think that our work gives us unique access to the work of world that we should exploit. If we don't do it, others will." The new services are given the heading "God arbejdslyst", which means something like job satisfaction. KRIFA has established an extensive programme of initial and advanced training. Various courses and seminars give participants tools

to become multipliers for job satisfaction and well-being in their companies. "We want to help our members to help other people in their company", says Nikolai Skøtt. Nikolai and his colleagues regularly attend conferences about various aspects of the course contents and are in contact with the science sector. But KRIFA has also made huge internal investments, and founded the so-called Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre in 2015. This is a separate department that collects data with external partners and publishes scientific studies on well-being at the workplace. Helle Stenbro works here: "We've been collecting data for years and are getting an ever clearer picture. We have been able to define altogether seven factors that define job satisfaction. The most important is meaningfulness", says Helle Stenbro. "If we have the feeling that our work has a meaning for us, for society or other people, then our work is not only better but above all healthier." The team also found out that a potential of 6.4 million euro could be unleashed if the Danish economy were to focus on well-being. "People are more productive when they enjoy their work. They are also far less frequently ill and take retirement at a later point in time", says Helle Stenbro. "The positive effect of well-being begins in the individual person and extends through to the social security systems." KRIFA regularly holds workshops and training events to impart this knowledge.

What the participants think

Carsten and Bo are two participants in a three-month KRIFA programme. Carsten is a salesman for a construction company and Bo is a plumber. "I recently returned to my old job after a 10-month break", says Carsten, "and I realised that lots of people in my company just weren't happy. Then I found out about the KRIFA course in a mail. I was totally surprised when my boss said I could come. But now I'm here." The group meets at KRIFA headquarters every Tuesday to work with trainers on concepts for leadership culture, management and communication. They then have homework for their working week, before they all meet again. After three months, they take a written test and write a paper about what they have experienced. They receive a certificate at the end of the course. "For me it's a bit like learning to drive", says Carsten, "Here I learn how to pass the test, but to drive really well you simply have to get out there and do it and keep practising. And this is the attitude with which I take what I've learned here into my workplace." By contrast, Bo reckons that what really helps is the new way of viewing senior executives. "I've learnt above all how different people tick and how to deal with that. I think we often forget how communication works when we're on the job."



COURSE PARTICIPANT CARSTEN



BO HOPES ABOVE ALL THAT THE COURSE WILL GIVE HIM A BETTER APPROACH TO COMMUNICATING WITH SENIOR EXECUTIVES

For a detailed insight into the studies by Helle Stenbro's team and the other factors involved in job satisfaction, please check out the EZA podcast **"We Work Europe"** on www.eza.org or scan this barcode.

We Work Europe





ROLF WEBER AND METTE CHRISTIANSEN

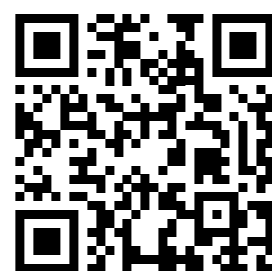
God arbejdslyst – does it really matter?

What's left is the question whether KRIFA's philosophy can be a role model for other countries. After all, well-being and job satisfaction are dimensions that really only the well-developed economies can afford with their widespread welfare state. This is also what KRIFA employees tend to say when asked about it. For example, Rolf Weber reports: "I once visited a mining trade union in Ukraine. Job satisfaction for them means coming out of the mine alive every day. That really makes our problems seem insignificant at first. But we've discussed these things

in detail with unions in countries that have a similarly differentiated welfare state and didn't fall on deaf ears." Helle Stenbro from the Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre says: "Of course we need a welfare state for God arbejdslyst, one that guarantees we won't become deprived if we lose our job. But I think this is a universal topic. People want to work, and if the job is good, then this has a positive effect on the whole of society. And so I do believe that you can make a start with fundamental things everywhere."

This article was written during a two-day visit to the KRIFA headquarters in October 2022. **EZA** already took up this issue back in 2017 with KRIFA as the topic for the kick-off seminar. We wanted to know how things have developed since then. If you want to find out more about the people mentioned in the article, you can check out the podcast **"We Work Europe"**. Here we talk about the new philosophy in two sequels and take a special look at the job satisfaction study.

We Work Europe



THE DIRECTIVE ON ADEQUATE MINIMUM WAGES IN SIX QUESTIONS

Interview with the MEPs Agnes Jongerius and Dennis Radtke



AGNES JONGERIUS

The directive on adequate minimum wages in the EU was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in October 2022. Member states now have two years' time to transpose its content into national law. This initiative is a big step for fighting in-work poverty and exploitation and constitutes major progress in implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The EZA had the opportunity to talk to Dennis Radtke (group of the European People's Party, Christian Democratic Union, DE) and Agnes Jongerius (group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, Labour Party, NL), both members of the European Parliament and co-rapporteurs for this directive. As such, they were responsible for drawing up a report with amendment proposals to the Parliament's Committee on Employment and had to present this report to the plenary; subsequently, they also represented the European Parliament in the negotiations between the Parliament and the Council.

INTERVIEW: Sergio De la Parra, Ralph Würschinger

PHOTOS: Agnes Jongerius, Dennis Radtke, (c)EPPGroup-MLahousse)

EZA: In all EU member states, trade unions negotiate wage levels through collective bargaining. Moreover, in 21 of the 27 member states, the law also sets a floor below which wages are not allowed to fall (a "statutory" minimum wage). In this context, why was this directive necessary?

Agnes Jongerius: In her first address to the European Parliament in 2019, Ursula von der Leyen proclaimed that everyone who works hard should be able to pay their bills and have a decent life. This was an acknowledgment that in Europe we are also moving towards the model that we know from the United States, where people have to combine two or three jobs to be able to feed their children and to pay for public transport. But we also see more and more working poor in Europe.

Dennis Radtke: When we look at the development of collective agreement coverage [i.e. the proportion of employees covered by collective agreements] in the European Union, we see that it is declining in many member states. This is another reason why we said it is high time to adopt such a directive.

EZA: In specific terms, what requirement does the directive stipulate to increase collective agreement coverage and tackle in-work poverty?

Dennis Radtke: The heart of this directive is the 80% target of collective bargaining coverage. Some member states like Austria, Sweden and France are already beyond this level but most member states are not. If a member state does not achieve this target, you have to come up with an action plan that describes which political action you will take to move towards this goal. This will be a game changer.

Agnes Jongerius: The directive also asks all member states to assess whether their minimum wage is adequate. They can do this for instance by working with a basket of goods and services that takes the different purchasing power in the respective member state into account. They can also use an international indicator, the so-called Kaitz index, which says

that the minimum wage should be related to the median or average wage in the specific member state, thus ensuring that the difference won't be too great.

Dennis Radtke: These indicators – 60% of the median wage and 50% of the average wage – are just a recommendation: they are not binding. However, we want to ensure that these criteria are included in the political debate on what is an adequate minimum wage, and that the social partners are involved in this debate right across the EU.

EZA: Which main amendments did Parliament manage to have adopted?

Dennis Radtke: The main amendment is that we managed to change the target for collective bargaining coverage. The Commission had proposed 70%. Parliament reached agreement on 80%. After the trialogue, everyone expected that we would be back to the 70% proposed by the Commission but we managed to keep 80%. All the questions on capacity building and ensuring the rights to collective bargaining, these are all improvements introduced by Parliament, and this is something that makes me very proud.

EZA: How binding is this directive?

Dennis Radtke: Here we need to avoid any kind of misunderstanding. We are not making it obligatory for any member state to introduce a statutory minimum wage or to raise the level of its minimum wage from one day to the next. But this directive is binding when it comes to the 80% collective bargaining coverage, which should be targeted over time. Moreover, we now have EU-wide criteria for assessing minimum wage adequacy. This is a valuable tool for the social partners.

Agnes Jongerius: The directive is giving a very clear direction, which is different from the old recipes of the EU. Member states are forced to sit at the table with their social partners to draw up a national action plan and send the results to Brussels. The directive is a weapon in the hands of those people who are fighting for higher wages in their



DENNIS RADTKE

own member states.

EZA: How challenging are the efforts that the member states need to make to reach the goals set by the directive?

Agnes Jongerius: Regarding the 80% collective bargaining coverage, seven member states are already at that level. These include Austria, for instance, which has no statutory minimum wage. It also includes Denmark, Italy, Finland, Belgium, France [and Sweden]. As to minimum wage adequacy, few member states already reach the goals of the directive. Remarkably, countries such as Bulgaria comply with this because the average wage there is very low. The directive therefore sets a very ambitious objective.

Dennis Radtke: A period of two years is allowed to transpose the directive into national law, after which the process [of reporting by member states and monitoring by the European Commission] will begin. It will be very interesting to see what will be included in the national action plans that have to be proposed to the European Commission.

“THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE TRADE UNIONS TO DRAW UP THEIR SHOPPING LIST: WHAT DO THEY WANT FROM THIS DEBATE?”

EZA: What is the role of trade unions in implementing the directive? Do you think they can play a role in shaping the way the implementation will take place?

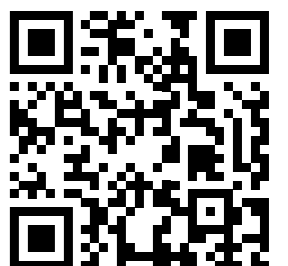
Agnes Jongerius: The time has come for the trade unions to draw up their shopping list: What do they want from this debate? What kind of facilities do they want? What kind of consultation or social dialogue structure? So this is now the time for the trade unions to debate the issues and prepare their demands for the national action plan.

Dennis Radtke: In this directive, we are proposing things to improve social partnership. And of course, this is a call for trade unions to ensure that national implementation is achieved in that same spirit, because the spirit of the directive is to strengthen social partnership.

EZA: Dennis Radtke and Agnes Jongerius, thank you very much for this interview.

This interview is a short summary of the “We Work Europe” podcast. If you would like to listen to the whole interview with Agnes Jongerius and Dennis Radtke, please just scan this barcode or visit: <https://www.eza.org/en/eza-podcast>

We Work Europe



SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL PEACE IN TROUBLED TIMES – SOCIAL DIALOGUE NEEDED AS NEVER BEFORE!

After two years of online kick-off seminars, the EZA network met in Vilnius at the end of September 2022 for its annual members conference.



LUC VAN DEN BRANDE & JELENA SOMS / LDF

TEXT: Sigrid Schraml, Luc Van den Brande
PHOTOS: Lukas Fleischmann

Lithuania – close to Ukraine and Russia on the EU's eastern border – proved to be the right place to address this year's topic "Solidarity and social peace in troubled times". The EU – and not only the EU – is facing multiple crises: still struggling with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, trying painfully to shape a green and just transition of its economies to limit the repercussions of climate change, dealing with labour shortages as a consequence of demographic developments and fighting the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine, namely soaring inflation and energy prices. The need for a well-functioning social dialogue is obvious. The social partners will have to play a key role in the current context of a tremendous loss of purchasing power in order to protect workers from the risk of poverty and to ensure social peace across Europe, while also opposing and taking the wind out of the sails of populist moments that are trying to sow division in European societies. As one of the speakers rightly pointed out, what is needed is a policy mix based on price control and wage increases, building

on a strong social dialogue. This will not be easy, given that collective agreements have very low coverage in many countries, as our Lithuanian friends reminded us. Coverage is far from the 80% target set by the recently adopted EU minimum wage directive. Nevertheless, the directive is a great success for those fighting for a more social Europe, and an important step into the right direction.

After years in which social dialogue was under attack in many EU member countries, the participants welcomed the European Commission's new initiative on social dialogue flagged up by Jörg Tagger, head of unit at DG Employment. Tagger pointed out that more social partners' agreements are needed on the European level. The EU Recommendation on Social Dialogue that has been announced for January 2023 is a recognition of the positive role unions can and must play in these current troubled times and is an outcome of the action plan on social dialogue. At the same time, several sceptical voices underlined that the success

The discussions in Vilnius provided much food for thought about further activities and trainings by the EZA network in the upcoming educational year 2023/24, which is currently in preparation.

time, several sceptical voices underlined that the success of the new initiative will depend on how effective it will be in practice. The debates in Vilnius also made it clear that innovation is needed to get through the current crises and to manage the transition to a more digital and sustainable economy. Furthermore, unions and workers' organisations are called upon to question their mindset again and again, and to move forward courageously. To this end, training for representatives of unions and workers' organisations is needed in view of the social dialogue 4.0, as part of the solution for all the challenges that we face. This is something EZA can provide as an educational centre with its longstanding experience.

Vilnius is only 550 km away from Lviv. Oleksandr Dz-hulyk and Yuriy Kurylo of Vost 'Volya' from Ukraine gave a devastating reminder of the situation in Ukraine and described how the work of their trade unions has changed in war time. Several speakers underlined the importance of integrating Ukrainian refugees in the EU

labour market as a prime instrument for social integration. At the same time, the influx of vulnerable worker groups into the labour market is generating an observable risk of social dumping and deregulation, which must be addressed. The efforts of many EZA member associations in supporting both Ukrainian refugees and local workers go in this direction. And yet it has been rightly pointed out that the help we offer refugees cannot be directed exclusively towards those fleeing Ukraine. There are many other refugees from other countries who deserve the same support. The discussions in Vilnius provided much food for thought about further activities and trainings by the EZA network in the upcoming educational year 2023/24, which is currently in preparation. Among others, the seminars will address topics such as the European recovery plan, integration in and equal opportunities on the labour market, digital and green transition, OSH, education, decent working conditions and wages, as well as capacity building for unions and workers' organisations. The new programme will be online on the EZA website in March 2023.



JÖRG TAGGER



OLEKSANDR DZHULYK

THE EZA SECRETARIAT HAS RECEIVED REINFORCEMENT

The new staff members introduce themselves

TEXT: Lukas Fleischmann
PHOTOS: Lukas Fleischmann



Sergio De la Parra has been working as a policy advisor in the EZA Brussels Office since 1 September:

"I am happy to join the EZA team and support its work from Brussels. Europe and social justice have been the common thread in my career, from the university benches, as a researcher and finally as a trade union representative. These issues are also at the heart of the work of EZA and its affiliates across Europe," says De la Parra. "Having been involved in collective bargaining myself, I know how important it is to have a fair social dialogue with informed partners who are able to talk to each other as equals. I am looking forward to standing alongside the EZA affiliates and supporting them in achieving this goal," says Sergio.

Katrin Brüggén has been working as Public Relations Officer and Assistant to the Secretary General since 1 December:

"I am very happy to have been given the opportunity to work for EZA and in a European context. I see myself as a European and am proud to be able to represent and spread the values of the EU. My studies and experiences abroad have taught me that communication and exchange at eye level are the right way to move forward together. I am excited about the work in the European workers' environment and the encounters in the entire EZA network and beyond. I am looking forward to the upcoming work and cooperation with the EZA team in Königswinter and getting to know each other at EZA seminars," says Katrin.



Heinz-Georg Kroells has been working for the EZA Secretariat since 1 December.

"As a convinced European, I am looking forward to being able to contribute to the exchange and promotion of workers' concerns in the European context as part of the EZA team. Using my foreign language and administrative skills to engage in social dialogue is deeply in line with my values of a peaceful, united, solidary and fair Europe. I am grateful for the opportunity to work on the European project in the EZA network."

Dear members, dear friends,

The entire EZA team would like to thank you for your close cooperation, for all the meetings, ideas and joint projects in the past year!

We are looking forward to the continuation in the new year, which lies ahead of us with old, still unanswered and new, still unanswered questions, with new projects, with impositions and joy over achievements... We wish you and yours a blessed Christmas and a healthy and inspiring year 2023, which will hopefully bring us all a return to peace in Europe!

Sigrid Schraml
EZA Secretary General



IMPRESSUM

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