

OVERVIEW

■ The situation of young people in the European labour market



Focus of the EZA education and training Programme 2014; a series of seminars with 20 projects, with academic assistance from the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna
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EDITORIAL



Dear Friends,
 We keep on experiencing polarising debates about immigrants and asylum seekers, and they also had their impact on the European elections. Politicians and others keep on fuelling people's fears of loss; citizens keep on wanting to close doors – see the result of the referendum in Switzerland against immigration – instead of approaching open doors. Behind closed doors there are possibilities of taking advantage of the positive

effects of immigration. The demographic shift, the resultant search for skilled workers, cross-border trade and services seem to be conducive to increasing ideas of integration. How can we achieve harmonisation and the integration of immigrants in every EU country? Although social security systems are regulated on a national basis, claims are often made on them on a European level. Solutions still need to be sought here.

One thing is certain: the people who come to us need good advice on questions of labour law, social security law and law relating to aliens. Health and long-term care insurance, pension, residence and work permit questions are just a few areas. Many EZA members are aware of this task and offer their assistance.

Yours,
 Roswitha Gottbehüt
 Secretary-General

Defending European social protection as a basic right

Over a working dinner during the 103rd Session of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), EZA and its member centre CFTC (Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens) issued an invitation to meet in the French town of Ferney-Voltaire at the end of May.

EZA President Bartho Pronk and EZA Secretary-General, Roswitha Gottbehüt, were involved in very intensive discussions with top level trade union representatives from the EZA network about the fact that those involved in the social dialogue must intensify and improve their work at all levels in order to defend European social protection as a basic right.

The trade union representatives criticised the fact that the European institutions were talking about socio-political cohesion and convergence, whilst nothing of the sort was happening in the countries

of Central and Eastern Europe. In some countries, troikas are being appointed as moderators of the social dialogue, something that has resulted in massive deregulation. "What does this mean in terms of the Treaty of Lisbon?" was the challenging and critical question asked.

The fact that the ILO and the EU are speaking different languages was also criticised. This can be seen in the questions of migration and social dumping. This is another reason why trade unions have to collaborate better with one another, in order to fight for more social justice. "We have to build Europe more intensively, underpinning the Social Dialogue and developing new ideas. This is also a mandate for EZA", was how those attending this meeting summarised it, said meeting being continued in the coming year.

Roswitha Gottbehüt ■

EZA education and training focus 2014: Europe 2020 Strategy and the situation of young people in the European labour market

Scandalously high youth unemployment rates in Europe”, “the fight against youth unemployment must be the top priority”, “a lost generation in Europe” – those are just a few of the statements made by leaders who are concerned about the employment situation of young people in Europe.

The EZA members are much further ahead than that: about 20 projects in the current education and training programme have addressed the situation of young people in the labour market. The EZA partners have realised that the fight against youth unemployment is not about slogans, it needs to be looked at closely. We have to take a good look at what young people need for them to be integrated in the labour market.

The EZA projects focus on European labour market strategies and instruments such as the “Youth Guarantee”, according to which every young person under the age of 25 is to be given a concrete, high-quality offer of employment within four months of finishing their education/training or becoming unemployed. Other key issues are the importance and quality of vocational training, and concern for the chances in the labour market of disadvantaged young people. The projects do not originate solely from organisations in countries with high youth unemployment rates. In many cases the EZA partners’ concern is about how the issue affects Europe as a whole: there is a risk that those who are not integrated in the labour market regard this as a European failure and, disappointed, reject thoughts of Europe.

Because the employment of young people in Europe is urgent, important and complex all in one, the EZA decided to relate these projects to the Europe 2020 Strategy and give them academic support. This is being done by the [Institute for Advanced Studies \(IHS\)](#) from Austria, whose academics make a presentation on the issue in a series of seminars and also assimilate the findings from the seminar.

The presentation provides exhaustive information on European and national strategies for combating youth unemployment, provides definitions of terms and data material relating to the issue,



Participants at the KAB Germany (Katholische Arbeitnehmer-Bewegung Deutschlands e.V./Catholic Workers' Movement) seminar “Social Europe in decline? Strategies against unemployment and poverty” held in June 2014 as part of a series of seminars

and gives detailed insights into successful systems of vocational training.

But the aim of the academic assistance is also to generate from the diversity of the different projects recommendations for action and demands, to enable as many young people as possible to be integrated in the European labour market in the long term. What is crucial is to act quickly and at the same time considerately, and to ensure that high-quality, good jobs are created. In this way the “Europe 2020 Strategy and the situation of young people in the European labour market” education and training focus combines academic findings with practical experience. This is how the EZA plans to help mobilise and strengthen workers’ organisations in the fight against youth unemployment. It will make use of the networked approach and input from IHS and the EZA in the various projects.

At the end of the education and training year, IHS will draw up and publish an academic final report taking into account the findings of the EZA projects on this issue. Its aim is to show workers’ organisations successful ways of helping to create employment prospects for young people in various ways as part of the social dialogue. It is already evident that workers’ organisations not only have to be active in creating such prospects but

must also monitor progress and step in to make corrections.

The EZA proceeded in a similar way in previous years and published academic studies on other aspects of the “Europe 2020” Strategy (see EZA website:

<http://www.eza.org/projekte/eza-gross-projekt-zur-strategie-europa-2020/>).

The EZA is aware that the fight against youth unemployment can only be fought on a basis of solidarity and shared responsibility. What is important more than anything is to do the right thing quickly and considerately.

That is precisely what the EZA decided to do with the “Europe 2020 Strategy and the situation of young people in the European labour market” education and training focus.

Norbert Klein ■

Cross-border mobility of workers and social security in the EU – EZA project co-ordination in 2014

Migration – long-term cross-border mobility – on average concerns less than 0.5% of the total population of the EU, but there are substantial differences between the regions. In the case of Eastern Europe, there is considerable and increasing net emigration from those countries. The largest relative numbers of emigration are observed in Romania, Bulgaria and Lithuania, while Romania and Poland exhibit the biggest absolute figures.

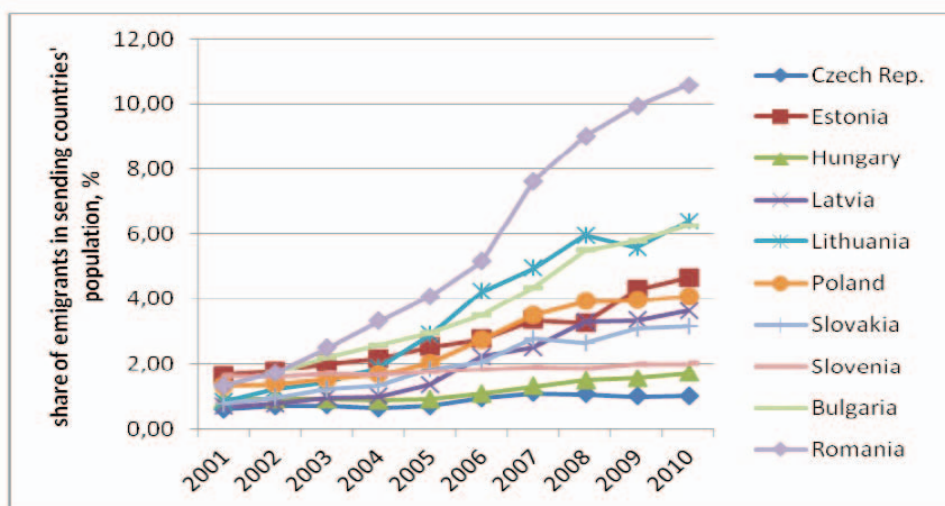
UNAIE (Unione Nazionale delle Associazioni degli Immigrati ed Emigrati) will analyse the role of worker mobility in creating new business opportunities at home and abroad, which can create new jobs both in the host countries and countries of origin.

ZD Nsi (Združenje delavcev Nove Slovenije) will collect and disseminate best practices of international co-operation changing cross-border worker mobility from being mostly driven by push fac-

to support the career development of citizens. The recent **mass migration and mobility** trends may demand a rethink of the original legal framework regulating worker mobility. **Trade unions and civil society organisations have an indispensable role in protecting mobile workers** often facing multiple problems when working abroad: lack of language skills, lack of knowledge of the legal, tax and social security system in the host country, weak bargaining power vis-à-vis employers, or vis-à-vis temporary work agencies. The efforts in this area of Podkrepa (in Bulgaria) and ÖGB (in Burgenland, Austria) were very convincing for the participants. There are also good practices in supporting the integration and career development of migrant people in the host countries, as demonstrated by UNAIE (Italy) and H+D (Spain).

There was substantial consensus among the seminar-goers of the need for more efforts and more resources to **make mobility visible and traceable**. This is needed among other things to shed light on the validity of a recent (and spreading) opinion that so-called ‘welfare tourism’ is the key motive of cross-border mobility in Europe. The first results of the research carried out by HIVA, however, indicate that this assumption is exaggerated.

György Lajtai ■



In the Mediterranean countries migration is also substantial, but there is a major difference in the sense that – as in Italy or Spain – emigration is compensated by permanent **immigration** from non-EU countries.

The following seminars organised on the issue of cross-border mobility of workers examine the regional specificities and the most important social consequences of mobility:

HIVA (Onderzoeksinstituut voor Arbeid en Samenleving) will focus on the flows of migrant/mobile workers and pensioners between member states and their take-up of social security rights. The seminar will review available and lacking statistical data on migrant and mobile workers.

H+D (Fundación Humanismo y Democracia) will highlight the motivation of cross-border worker mobility in the Mediterranean region, the expectations of the migrants and the realisation of their plans.

tors (unemployment, impoverishment) into a process motivated by pull factors: finding better job quality, getting further training and wider work experience.

The first seminar in the series entitled “**Cross-border workers mobility in Europe, tasks for the trade unions, the employers and the governments**”, organised by MOSZ (Munkástanácsok Országos Szövetsége), was held on 15-16 May 2014 in Budapest. One of the main conclusions was that the drivers of mobility in Eastern Europe are mainly the **increasing economic and income inequalities between the regions within the Union and demographic challenges**, inducing competition for the younger and better-skilled workforce.

The second conclusion of the meeting was that the vulnerability of mobile workers was greater, the stronger the role of unemployment and of low income in migration. The original idea of free mobility of workers was to facilitate the optimal distribution of employment and

Time for responsibility – The 5th European Social Week

The European Social Week has a special place in the comprehensive package of EZA projects. Every two or three years this initiative provides a platform for gathering, confrontation and mutual encouragement in the search for answers to the major social challenges in Europe. The focus from which this derives is the wealth of Christian-social thinking.

The first European Social Week was held in 1997 in the European Parliament in Brussels. The fifth one was organised from 23 to 25 January 2014 in Ostend on the Belgian coast. The 200-odd participants, representatives of Christian workers' organisations from practically every country in Europe, addressed three issues in the three-day seminar. In the first part, answers were sought to the question: What direction must we go in with the European Social Model? A model that is under pressure because of the financial and economic crisis. In the second section the seminar-goers explored new relations between companies and workers. What does a contemporary, creative, but also realistic social dialogue mean in this context? The third part focused on how human rights, the environment, and concern for the climate, combined with an inspiring social policy, call for an indispensable, interlinked approach with regard to sustainable development.

The three sessions were also introduced with a keynote speech. Three excellent speakers: namely Jérôme Vignon, President of the French Social Week, Pierre Defraigne, Professor of Economics and Executive Director of the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation, and Dirk Messner, Professor of Political Sciences and Head of the German Development

Institute. Each keynote speech was followed by three shorter presentations: the first with supplementary, specific analytical elements; the second with examples of concrete action models; and the third on what value the Christian-social tradition can add to each of these issues.

New paradigms

The most remarkable statement at the end of the three days was the wish to break away from standard analyses and, where necessary, seek new paradigms together. Bea Cantillion, Director of the Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy at the University of Antwerp, said this openly in her presentation: "The standard paradigms from which the national governments and also European institutions often proceed, like "Growth creates jobs", no longer work. The fine targets of the Lisbon Strategy and the European Commission's Europe 2020 Strategy made sense, but they haven't been able to close the gap between rich and poor or significantly reduce youth unemployment in Europe. The increasingly critical question people are asking themselves is whether it is ethically defensible for the multinationals' huge profits to be speculated on the world financial markets without them contributing to people's prosperity and wellbeing."

This was accompanied by an explicit plea for more action models. Analyses are indeed necessary, but often it ends there. There is a call for more, fresh initiatives to be taken offering a concrete solution. There is also a call for a government policy not restricted to party-political bickering but resulting from quality, modern leadership, geared to quality of life for

everyone and inspired by an ethical vision.

For further information, go to www.5esw.eu.

The 6th European Social Week is being held in the Netherlands in February 2016.

Leo Pauwels, Honorary Chairman of EZA ■

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