

Not Just More Jobs, But Also Better Jobs!



75% of the population between the ages of 20 and 64 is to be in employment by 2020 – that is the prime target set by the European Union in its “Europe 2020” strategy.

A major concern of EZA and its network of Christian-social workers’ organisations is that not only *more* jobs are created but also *better* ones. That is why as part of its “European Social Dialogue” 2011 education and training programme EZA is carrying out a special project on this issue. Involving 13 education and training centres from nine different European countries in a total of twelve seminars, the project’s aim is to come up with answers to the question of what influence workers’ organisations can have on implementing the “Europe 2020” strategy and how they can strengthen the social dimension.

The cycle of events began on the first weekend in March with a seminar held by the Solidarność trade union in Gdansk. 47 participants representing workers’ organisations from six EU member states discussed why some of the employment targets of the Lisbon Strategy had been missed, and how the new “Europe 2020” strategy could be more successful in this area. An analysis of the national labour markets pointed up a few factors in common: the exclusion of the least qualified workers from the labour market, the mismatch between the content of training and the labour market’s requirements, the oversupply of university-educated employees. The participants said that what was needed more than most to solve the problems was a long-term training policy that covered the labour market’s requirements and the role of lifelong learning. Although in recent years the policy had produced an increase in the number of jobs, it had also resulted in a decrease in the quality of the jobs. To learn from the mistakes of the Lisbon Strategy and to successfully achieve the targets of the “Europe 2020” strategy, the seminar-goers emphatically called for greater involvement of the social partners.



The seminar series on the “Europe 2020” strategy is backed up scientifically by a research paper from HIVA, the Onderzoeksinstituut voor Arbeid en Samenleving of the Catholic University of Leuven.

The first two chapters of the research paper will comprise a macroeconomic forecast on how labour markets in the EU will develop by 2020, and a comparison of the employment policies of the member states that are relatively close to the target of 75% with those member states that are currently well short of the target. Starting from the premise that in a number of European states people that work more than four hours a week are counted as employed, the question to look into is how more jobs can also mean better jobs, at the same time examining whether people can make a living out of their work. The conclusion of the research paper is to be criteria for decent work and concrete approaches to shaping working conditions that are of general application across the EU, based in part on examples of best practice for more and better work from the EZA network. Working on the project from the HIVA

side are its former director Hubert Cossey and Tom Vandenbrande, and from EZA Norbert Klein and Matthias Homey, as well as Michael Schwarz on a freelance basis. The results of the seminars and the research paper will be presented and summarised at a conference organised by Cartel Alfa/CORESI in February 2012. EZA plans to continue its special project on the “Europe 2020” strategy in the next two years, with the topics scheduled being reducing the number of people threatened by poverty by 20 million by 2020 and achieving the 20-20-20 climate protection and energy targets by 2020.