

## **Know-how and best practices examples on European Social Dialogue Sectoral social dialogue in commerce**

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### **EuroCommerce and the beginning of social dialogue in Commerce**

- EuroCommerce is the European Retail federation and represents, retail, wholesale and international trade
- We are the recognized social partners at EU level for the commerce sector from the employer's side
- Social dialogue for commerce has already started informally in 1983
- Mutual recognition as social partners in 1993 (meaning of art. 3-4 of the 1991) Agreement
- Joint outcomes already achieved at that time
- Already commitment to a follow-up at national level (e.g. round table discussions)
- Our social partner is UNI Europa Commerce

## The establishment of the SSD Committee in 1998

- Decision on sectoral social dialogue Committees of the 20/05/1998 and impact on SSDC for commerce:
  - joint request of the commerce SP to establish a sectoral social dialogue Committee further to the publication of the Decision the 10/09/1998;
  - The SSDC Committee for commerce was established the 30/11/1998



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## The agreement of 1998 establishing the SSDC

- Underline the contribution to the development of SD at both national and EU level
- Insist on work with Candidate countries (now NMS)
- Aims:
  - Develop a sustainable and competitive commerce sector
  - Make the sector more attractive, maintain and increase employment
- Tools:
  - Exchange of information and good practices
  - Concluding joint outcomes
  - Organise joint activities (workshops, projects etc.) on important issues



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## Main issues dealt with

- We have finalised in November our new work programme for 2012-2013, still « details » to be finalised.
- The issues dealt with are:
  - Adaptation to change, vocational training and skill needs (main issue: sector skills council project);
  - EU Employment strategy and the commerce sector (new! main issue: contribute to build a better and more inclusive labour market)
  - Joint follow-up of EU policies with a social impact on commerce (e.g. retail market monitoring, social aspects of the single market act, exchange of views on the WTD...)
  - Health, safety and well-being at work: ( e.g.third-party violence, stress, psycho-social risks...)
  - Improving the effectiveness of social dialogue : (capacity building for NMS, joint follow-up of our common outcomes)



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## What did we achieve so far?

- Many outcomes of the EU social dialogue: joint statements, toolkits, recommendations, guidelines...
- The most recent and relevant joint achievements:
  - 2009: Joint toolkit on the prevention of third-party violence in commerce (FR, DE, EN)
  - 2010: Common contribution of the social partners for commerce to some flagship initiatives of the "EU 2020: A European strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"
  - 2010: joint letter of the commerce social partners on social aspects of retail market monitoring
  - 2010: Multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work (+ health, security, education and local governments SP)
  - 2011: EuroCommerce and UNI Europa Commerce joint opinion on the Bastos report on the Agenda for new Skills and Jobs



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## Next steps

- New project on skills needs phase 2: towards a sector skills council
- Surveys of the social partners in various countries to assess the follow-up of joint outcomes
- Contribute in studies implemented by EuroFound on working conditions and work/life balance
- Joint contribution to the so-called « Retail action plan » (follow-up of the Retail Market monitoring). Main issues dealt with: CSR and consumers, skills anticipation, fighting informal economy



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## What are the stronger points?

SD: an excellent tool for the promotion of the sector and of joint interest

- SD deals mainly with wide EU policies issues of common interest for both employers and employees and therefore allows to:
  - Promote the image and the visibility of the sector;
  - Improving adaptability of companies and employability of workers;
  - Work together to develop solution on European issues of common interest
  - Increase trust and cooperation
  - Contribute jointly to EU sectoral policies (e.g. retail market monitoring)



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## And the weak ones?

- Sometimes, different vision of EU SD between the employers and employees (especially on issues to be dealt with at national/EU level- subsidiarity);
- Weak participation of representatives of NMS and candidate countries to the SD activities
- Not enough visibility of the social dialogue from some EU services
  - It makes the follow-up difficult, especially for the commerce sector (many DGs involved)
  - However, this aspect has recently given some signals for improvement (DG MARKT)
- Structural differences in the representativeness between employers/employees could cause unbalances between the SP



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## As a conclusion....

- Positive impact on the relations between the social partners at EU level « immaterial dimension »
- Important to deal with EU policies where the EU social partners can make the difference
- Complementarities but also differences between the EU and the national levels:
  - Better dissemination and awareness of the national social partners on the results achieved at EU level
  - Not all national issues can be dealt with at EU level!
- Important to deal with EU policies where the EU social partners can make the difference
- Autonomy of social partners is essential
- Importance to achieve tangible outcomes (that give results)
- Practical approach is key to success!!



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**Thank you for your attention!**

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