

communiqué



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Issue 10, December 2005

DIRECTOR'S DIARY

The process of replacing the separate networks for the collection of national data for the three observatories (EIRO, EWCO and ERM) by one network with data collection covering all Member States is nearing its end. It is expected that the *synergy* gained through working with one network will further strengthen the Foundation's capacity for comparative research. The aim of achieving further synergy in the Foundation activities and working methods will remain a priority for 2006.



In 2006, the Foundation will further strengthen its quality assurance approach through qualitative post-testing of the 2005 European Working Conditions Survey. The objective is to implement a similarly sound approach in quality assurance for case study methodologies. By the end of the current four-year programme, the Foundation should be recognised for the quality of its case studies in the same way as it is currently recognised and appreciated for the quality of its surveys and monitoring instruments.

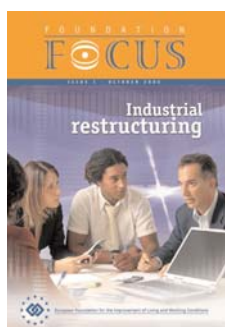
During this month, Jorma Karppinen will take up his post as Director of the Foundation. His appointment completes the Directorate team leading the Foundation, and his arrival is much anticipated by everyone at the Foundation.

Finally, I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2006.

Willy Buschak
Acting Director

Publication of the Month

Foundation Focus



www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0521.htm

New Director appointed for the Foundation

Jorma Karppinen has been appointed Director of the Foundation by the European Commission. A Finnish national, with over 20 years of management experience in international business, Jorma Karppinen will take up his post in December 2005.

At a time when creating new jobs is the main priority for governments, employer organisations and trade unions alike in Europe, Jorma Karppinen, a 57-year old Finn with over 20 years of experience in international business development and management, has been appointed the Foundation's new Director. With an academic background in engineering and technical physics, including a doctorate in technology awarded in 1979, his career spans positions in scientific research, marketing and development, and senior management with Nokia Electronics, Afora Ltd and Fortum Engineering Ltd.

Read more on www.eurofound.eu.int/press/communique/2005/dec/newsletter2.htm

Focusing on a limited number of relevant policy themes

Labour market mobility, employment creation, managing restructuring, working time arrangements and work-life balance will be the focus of the Foundation's programme of work in 2006. The Foundation will also contribute to the 2006 European Year of Workers' Mobility, and present the findings from its European Working Conditions Survey 2005 and Company Survey on Working Time and Work-life balance.

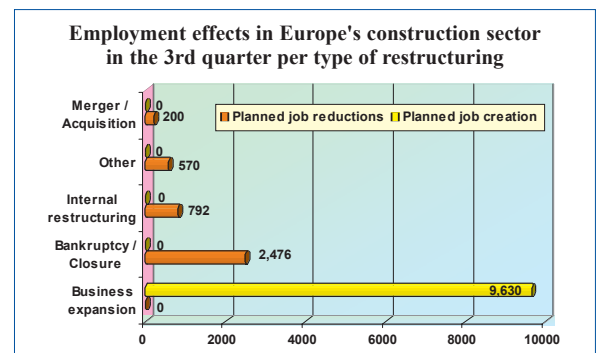
'The Foundation is in a strong position to contribute to the improvement of living and working conditions in Europe in the medium- and long-term perspective,' said Acting Director **Willy Buschak** after the Foundation's Governing Board adopted the proposed programme of work for 2006. 'Satisfactory results from all the Foundation's activities continue to increase the credibility among its stakeholders.'

Read more on www.eurofound.eu.int/press/communique/2005/dec/newsletter3.htm

Research in brief

Industrial relations in the construction sector

The challenges for the European social partners in the construction sector are influenced by some of the industry's particularities: low productivity; and weak industry image among customers and potential new workers. In the past three months, however, 35 restructuring cases totalling the creation of 9,630 jobs and the loss of 4,038 jobs were announced in the sector. In most cases, these jobs result from booming expanding markets in eastern Europe, rather than from company relocations.



Source: ERM Quarterly 3 2005

More on www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/erm/index.php?template=quarterly

Four future scenarios for the chemical industry

The European chemicals industry has to accelerate the pace of innovation to stay in the lead, due to substantial foreign investments in chemical production in the booming market of Asia, according to the EMCC Sector Futures report on the chemicals industry. Four scenarios have been developed for the sector: the 'Sunny' scenario refers to a positive market situation and, though unrealistic, would result in a continued growth in the chemical sector; in the 'Cloudy' and 'Rain' scenarios the market weakness would lead to a deterioration of competitiveness and profitability levels; finally, the 'Storm' scenario is characterised by a very discouraging macro political environment, which would end up in a rapid loss of the global market share.

More on www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/sector_futures.htm

Life's jigsaw puzzle campaign: Connecting generations, gender and time

A new campaign, focusing on current challenges to the social and working patterns encountered across European countries, will be launched next January by the Foundation. Within the 2005–2008 work programme, *Changing Europe: Better work, better life*, the new project aims at contributing to raising awareness of three current top priority issues: employment initiatives for an ageing workforce; gender-based inequalities in family and working life; arrangement of working time over the life course. The campaign, which will run over six months, will feature a series of conferences as well as printed publications and online information.

More information on www.eurofound.eu.int/areas/worklifebalance/puzzlecampaign.htm

How competitive is Europe?

Europe runs the risk of missing the goal of becoming the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy. Is business paralysed by red tape and stringent regulation and cannot exploit its full potential? Or is it that governments have not acted, perceiving the necessary reforms as being unpopular with their voters? The third Foundation Forum, taking place in Dublin Castle on 2–3 November 2006, will address these questions in its unique open debate format aimed at Europe's political leaders, social partners, business people, and academics. Participants will find out how to increase competitiveness and reform the European social model at the same time.

New information posted on www.eurofound.eu.int

More effort needed in fight against undeclared work

Undeclared work has dramatic effects on workers' incomes, fair competition, security, and working conditions. Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom report the lowest rates of undeclared work in Europe, with the highest found in Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece and Slovenia. The latest EIRO overview on 'Industrial relations and undeclared work' looks at efforts to try and tackle the problem. Trade unions in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and the UK, for example, are attempting to organise people who are working in this underground economy. Employers' organisations in the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have introduced certification systems for bona fide companies which comply with tax and social security obligations. However, there is a need for more integrated approaches, with multilateral and binding initiatives, which will call for greater efforts by social partners and government, according to the report.

Read the full report on www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/thematicfeature11.html

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New structures, forms and processes of governance in European Industrial Relations

8–9 December 2005, Brussels, Belgium
Foundation own event

European Conference on 'Social conditions in an Enlarged Europe'

8–9 December 2005, Berlin, Germany
Social research centre, Berlin (WZB)

Monitoring Quality of Life – Romania and Bulgaria

14–15 December 2005, Brussels, Belgium
Foundation own event

European Regeneration Area's Network Seminar

16–17 December 2005, Venice, Italy
Quartiers-en-Crise, European Regeneration Area's Network

PUBLICATIONS

Unless otherwise stated, publications are in English

European industrial relations dictionary Overview and CD ROM

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0502.htm

Foundation Focus 1/05 Industrial restructuring

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0521.htm

Workplace employment practices in Britain Survey 2004

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0556.htm

Ageing workforce: Case studies

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef05105C.htm

Working time options over the life course: Institutional and social security provisions

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef05101.htm

Working conditions in an enlarged Europe

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef05107.htm

Industrial relations in agriculture

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0585.htm

ERM Quarterly Issue 3, Autumn 2005

www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0547.htm

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