

communiqué



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Issue 6, June 2006

DIRECTOR'S DIARY

Foundation Forum 2006

Over the last five years, European governments and social partners have made significant efforts to make Europe the world's most competitive, knowledge-based economy. But what are the obstacles that are still in the way? Are businesses so paralysed by red tape and regulations that they cannot reach their full potential? Or is it that governments have failed to act, perceiving the necessary reforms as potentially unpopular with their electorates?

Over 2–3 November of this year, the third Foundation Forum will address these issues and dilemmas, looking at ways of simultaneously increasing competitiveness and reforming the European social model. The Foundation has established this biennial event as an arena for Europe's political leaders, social partner representatives, business leaders and academics to engage in open debate. One of the Forum's distinctive – and successful – features is the lack of division between speakers and listeners: all participants are expected to engage in the debate. For further information see:

www.eurofound.eu.int/events/forum.htm

During June, the Foundation will be active both with its own work and contributing to external events. This month, preparations will be completed for the Foundation's programme of work for 2007. At the end of June and at the beginning of July, the annual group meetings of representatives from government, employer organisations and trade unions will take place in the Foundation's premises in Dublin. And Foundation experts will contribute to a conference on 'Young and old in a changing Europe: The demographic challenge for social care and health', organised by the European Social Network under the auspices of the Austrian EU Presidency, on 19–21 June, in Vienna.

Jorma Karppinen

Director

Employment initiatives for an ageing workforce

The Foundation's forthcoming new report, *Developments in employment initiatives for an ageing workforce*, provides an overview of national policy, and of actions taken by social partners, in tackling the challenges and reaping the benefits of an ageing labour force.

As the issue of ageing of the labour force moves up the European policy agenda, the Foundation's new report, *Developments in employment initiatives for an ageing workforce*, has found that organisations' approaches to age management have become more complex.

The Foundation first studied the issue in the mid 1990s: the project 'Combating age barriers in employment' examined good practise in over 100 companies in 11 of the former EU15 countries. The new report follows up these case studies to assess how governments and employers are responding to workforce ageing, and to find out which factors affect how the issue is perceived.

'There is, however, very little substance to suggest a profound shift in the treatment of older workers,' says **Jorma Karppinen**, the Foundation's Director, in a response to the findings. 'In fact, developing and implementing good practice is more commonly triggered by the direct business needs of companies and their realisation of the value of older workers, rather than pressure from public policy or age-awareness campaigns'.

Read more at www.eurofound.eu.int/press/communiqué/2006/june/newsletter2.htm

Investigating labour market mobility

Future labour migration from the new Member States to the former EU15 countries will be limited, but it will vary significantly, new Foundation research findings suggest. However, the report warns, in the medium- to long-term, the greatest challenges will be posed by 'youth drain' and 'brain drain' to those countries experiencing net migration.

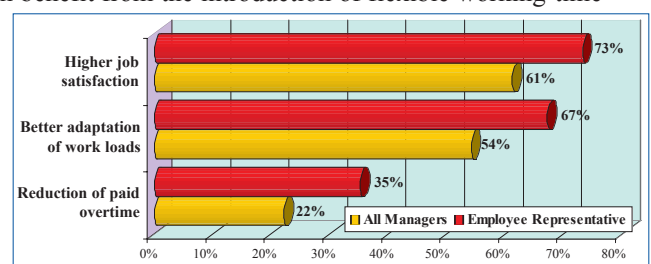
Well-educated men and women of 25–43 years of age, from Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, are four times more likely to migrate to another EU Member State than their equivalents from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, according to a new Foundation report that assesses EU policies concerning labour mobility across Europe. Citizens from the former EU15 countries with the highest mobility (Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Ireland) are twice as likely to migrate for work reasons as the citizens in the low-mobility countries of the new Member States.

Read more on www.eurofound.eu.int/press/communiqué/2006/june/newsletter3.htm

RESEARCH IN BRIEF

Effects of introducing flexible working time

The Foundation's new survey on working time and work-life balance show that both companies and workers can benefit from the introduction of flexible working-time arrangements. Both frequently report higher job satisfaction followed by a better adaptation of working hours to the workload as an outcome of the introduction of flexible working times.



Source: *Working time and work-life balance in European companies*, © EF 2006

Report available at www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0627.htm

Foundation roadshows in Latvia and Lithuania

Foundation research findings indicate that workers in Latvia enjoy the most flexible working time arrangements in 25 European countries, government officials and social partners in Riga, Latvia will be told on 6–7 June. The two-day visit by Foundation representatives, part of its ongoing regular meeting with its stakeholders in the roadshow, will be followed by a second two-day stop in Vilnius, Lithuania. Seminars will be held in both locations, to which will also be invited representatives from non-governmental organisations. The seminars will outline recent analysis indicating that both countries risk losing many well-educated young men and women who are migrating to other parts of Europe in search of better income and career opportunities.

More information at www.eurofound.eu.int/events/roadshowlatvia2006/index.htm

EU-wide coverage for EWCO

The Foundation's European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO) has completed the planned expansion of its network of correspondents to all 25 EU Member States, plus Bulgaria, Romania and Norway. The EWCO portal provides regular updates and information about developments in working conditions at national levels, as well as regular comprehensive thematic reports and overviews – most recently on work-related stress, on the impact of training on individuals' employability and on combining family duties with full-time work. Over the last 12 months, some 150 news updates have been published on the site.

Read more about Europe's working conditions at www.eurofound.eu.int/ewco/

Helping SMEs succeed in the internal market

Improved access to new markets in an enlarged EU is one of the prime objectives in the European Commission's renewed approach to small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs). The Foundation's European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC) will jointly organise a company network seminar with the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) in Berlin on 28–29 June, which will examine the challenges SMEs face when operating across European borders, and the role innovation plays in facilitating this process. The company seminar will gather representatives from SMEs as well as policy-makers to address how to best help national governments develop more coherent and coordinated policies by integrating priority actions for SMEs in their national reform programmes.

More information about the seminar is available at www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/eu06006a.html

Collective dispute resolution in an enlarged European Union

Promoting good industrial relations continues to be a major issue in Europe. A new review from the Foundation's European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) highlights the diversity of collective dispute resolution systems and practices across the enlarged European Union. The review finds that mediation is the most commonly used method for resolving conflicts; arbitration is the most readily available, but remains unpopular because of the autonomous and voluntary nature of most European industrial relations systems. The EIRO review also outlines the current roles and views of social partners concerning assessment, redesign, and progressive change in this area. It focuses particular attention on the differences between the EU15, in which only minor adjustments are needed, and the new Member States, which must create public sector regulations and more effective resolution agents.

Read the full report available from July at www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int

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2006 AARP leadership study: International health and long-term care
8–9 June, The Hague, Netherlands
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

European Works Councils: Experience in new Member States
19–20 June, Warsaw, Poland
Foundation own event

Young and old in a changing Europe: the demographic challenge for social care and health
19–21 June 2006, Vienna, Austria
European Social Network, under the auspices of the Austrian EU Presidency

Integration of migrants at the workplace
22–23 June 2006, Dublin, Ireland
Foundation, jointly with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Relocation: Challenges and opportunities
28–29 June, Brussels, Belgium
The Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

PUBLICATIONS

Unless otherwise stated, publications are in English

ERM Quarterly Issue 1 2006
www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/erm/index.php?template=quarterly

A guide to good practice in age management
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef05137.htm

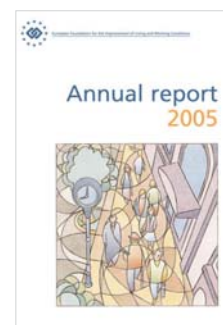
Annual report 2005
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0621.htm

Social integration of immigrants: contribution of local and regional authorities
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0622.htm

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Publication of the Month

Annual report 2005



www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0621.htm