

# COMMUNIQUÉ



EUROPEAN FOUNDATION

*for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*

## 25th anniversary conference

Under the auspices of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Foundation is hosting a conference, 25 years for a social Europe, in Brussels on 21 September.

Chair of the Foundation's Administrative Board, Mr Jan Willem van den Braak, will open the proceedings and Ms L Onkelinx, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Employment in Belgium will make the opening statement.

Ms A Diamantopoulou, Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Mr M

## The social policy agenda

Welcoming the Communication from the Commission on the social policy agenda, director Raymond-Pierre Bodin says that the Foundation has an important role to play in progressing its policy objectives.

The Communication has invited the Foundation to put in place an information mechanism on change which could also serve as a forum for exchange. This proposal has been identified in the Communication as a means of anticipating and managing change and adapting to new working environments.

'The Foundation looks forward to taking up the challenge of developing an observatory on change. It already has considerable experience in building and maintaining networks. EIRO, the European Industrial Relations Observatory, developed and managed by the Foundation, has proved itself as an enormously valuable information resource in industrial relations. The Foundation will further contribute to the proactive approach to change through its membership of EWON (European Work Organisation Network).'



Policy analysis and research are identified as important in underpinning the implementation of the social policy agenda. The promotion of quality has been identified as a driving force for a thriving European economy by the Communication. This is seen as a particular area of expertise of the Foundation which will continue its work in promoting quality in work, in industrial relations and combining family and work in its new four-year programme of work. 'As director, I am particularly committed to developing the Foundation as a forum for promoting social dialogue. It is ideally positioned to bring the social actors in Europe together to discuss issues of common interest. This is another measure which is in line with the objectives set out by the Communication.'

Rocard, Chairman of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament and Ms B Rangoni Machiavelli, President of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Union will make statements. Mr R-P Bodin, Director, will present the Foundation's position.

The concluding session will be chaired by Mr M Boisnel, Vice-chair of the Board. Mr Correa Gago, President of CEEP, Mr E Gabaglio, Secretary General of ETUC, Mr D Hudig, Secretary General of UNICE and Ms O Quintin, Director General for Employment and Social Affairs will make statements. There will be a closing statement from the French Presidency of the European Union. 

### ***In this issue:***

**labour participation • benchmarking • EIRO user survey**

# Labour participation

The Foundation has recently published a series of four summaries which set out the key findings of its EU-wide (and Norway) survey on Employment Options of the Future. Essentially the survey seeks to answer three fundamental questions – who wants to work?, why do they want to work?, and when do they want to work? The four main target groups of the survey are: employed persons, young entrants, women returners and unemployed persons.

*Communiqué* will look at some of the main findings of the survey under four separate headings: labour market participation: now and in the future; self-employment: choice or necessity?; full-time or part-time work: realities and options; combining family and work.

The survey results on labour market participation indicate a widespread intention among the non-working population to take up paid employment within the next five years. There is also a high level of work experience among the target groups identified by the survey, in particular women returners and the unemployed.

However, the survey also indicated that there is a gap in the labour market in what it offers to workers and what workers actually want. Only 35 per cent of workers are happy with their current working hours, 11 per cent would like to work more and about 54 per cent would like to work less.

The group of entrants and re-entrants show a high degree of flexibility in some of their preferences, with at least 30 per cent in each target group being ready to consider self-employment and more than 80 per cent

willing to accept part-time work. Job security remains a determining factor in job strategies for two out of the three target groups. Only young entrants to the labour market would be willing to accept a non-permanent contract.

Four-fifths of the unemployed are presently looking for work but confidence about finding work is not at all widespread. The take-up of help and advice about the labour market is also generally low.

The summary suggests a number of social and policy implications. The main constraints on labour participation are identified by the survey as the discrepancy between the current working time model and the wish for substantial part-time expressed by the women returners; the still on-going long-term unemployment and the lack of marketable skills for the unemployed.

Contact: [dimitrios.politis@eurofound.ie](mailto:dimitrios.politis@eurofound.ie)

## Best

*Shiftwork and Health*, the latest edition of *Best* published by the Foundation, includes the results of general surveys on health and studies of the long-term effects of shiftwork. A series of articles examine issues such as sleep and fatigue, digestion, heart disease, social and domestic life and psychological problems. It also covers the importance of medical surveillance and health education and suggests solutions to the issues raised.

Contact: [dimitrios.politis@eurofound.ie](mailto:dimitrios.politis@eurofound.ie)

## ISSA conference

Agnès Parent-Thirion, research manager, will address a workshop, Labour market policies: Social rights and responsibilities, at the International Research Conference on Social Security in the Global Village in Helsinki on 25-27 September. She will present a paper on the first findings from a Foundation study on coordination in activation policies of minimum-income recipients in 11 European countries. The final report will be published in early 2001.

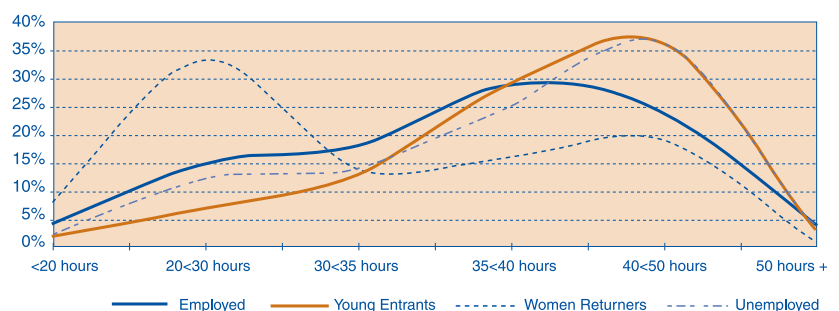
The conference will focus on the evolving framework of social security, with special emphasis on the changing relationship between labour markets and social security, changes in financing of social security schemes, and inequalities and social cohesion.

Contact: [teresa.renehan@eurofound.ie](mailto:teresa.renehan@eurofound.ie)

## research in figures

### Future working time preferences of presently employed, entry and re-entry groups

Source: Employment options and labour market participation



# Links with Parliament

Informed policy making must be underpinned by authoritative and comprehensive research and analysis. A major part of the Foundation's remit is to produce and communicate that kind of information on working and living conditions to policy makers.

An important channel of communication between the Foundation and policy makers is the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, a standing committee of the European Parliament, with responsibility for matters relating to employment policy and a wide range of social policies including the protection of living and working conditions. Its brief also includes responsibility for the Foundation itself.

## Fostering relations

Bartho Pronk MEP, as appointed liaison, has fostered links between the Foundation and the Committee over the past seven years. He is a member of the group of European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats and also a substitute member of the Committee on Budgets. During a recent visit to the Foundation, he met with the director and had extensive briefings from research managers in specific areas of the Foundation's work as well as discussions on developments in the Foundation's information and dissemination policy. He also addressed the staff and conducted a question and answer session. In particular, he addressed the Foundation's role as an information provider and the availability of access to electronic networks.

## Overlapping purpose

Most of the work of the Foundation has something to do with the work of the Committee and, equally, most of the work of the Committee has something to do with the Foundation, he said. This overlap of purpose provides the Foundation with considerable opportunities for making an input into policy at this level.

Mr Pronk stressed the Committee members' need for specific, relevant information. There is always a demand for high quality information. Given their time constraints, MEPs want information that is accurate and readily available. He said the Foundation was

fortunate to have data banks, built up over long periods, as these provide very useful information particularly for charting trends in certain areas of employment and social policy.

In particular, he referred to the Working Conditions Surveys. He was also briefed on the Foundation's recent work on employment pacts which he believes should be very useful



*Bartho Pronk, MEP*

to the Committee because of the sectoral detail in different Member States which has been examined by the research.

Both for the preparation of his reports, and also as coordinator for the PPE-DE Group, he said he found the Foundation's work can be either the motivation or foundation of reports prepared by the Committee.

## The double web

In addressing the question of how the most effective use can be made of the Foundation's work, Bartho Pronk highlighted the change over six years in the move away from printed material to electronic information. However, in his opinion, there is a two-tier system of information operating on the web which he describes as the 'double web'.

In his opinion, if the availability of electronic information is to be fully exploited, organisations should not construct their websites as an external information source but should link the two sources of information within the organisation. He does

not favour 'secret networks'. For instance, he said, the Parliament has an external website with very little relevant information while the intranet, which is not accessible, is where the relevant information concerning committees and reports is held.

In particular he commented on the lack of access by the Foundation to electronic networks both in the Parliament and at Commission level.

Likewise, he believes that there are considerable amounts of useful information on European and national networks which could be valuable to legislators, like his Committee, but are not available because of the 'double web'. For instance, he cited the fact that data on social protection presents tremendous problems for policy makers in that much of it is inaccurate, yet one would expect this information to be accurately held in national networks. 🌐



## 3-5 October

Expo 2000, Future Works: Labour, Sustainable Business and Social Responsibility Hannover. Participation by Foundation.

## 5 October

Forum International Travail Santé, Paris. Coordinator R-P Bodin.

## 19-20 October

European Conference 'Social Exclusion in Rural Areas', Clermont-Ferrand. Presentation by Agnes Parent-Thirion.

---





## Publications mentioned

### **BEST 1/2000: Shiftwork and health**

Available in EN, FR, (to be published also in DE)

[www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)

### **Full-time or part-time work: realities and options**

Available in EN (to be published in all languages)

[www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)

### **Labour market participation: now and in the future**

Available in EN (to be published in all languages)

[www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)

### **Self-employment: choice or necessity?**

Available in EN (to be published in all languages)

[www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)

### **Working conditions in the European Union: Summary**

Available online in ES DA DE GR EN FR IT NL PT FI SV

[www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)

## New publications

Design for sustainable development:

### **Crops for sustainable enterprise**

Available in EN

[www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)

### **Employment options and labour market participation**

Available in EN (to be published also in DE and FR)

[www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)

### **Flexibility and working conditions: a qualitative and comparative study in seven EU Member States**

Available in EN (to be published also in DE and FR) €22

Cat. no. TJ-31-00-247-EN-C


### **Negotiating European Works Councils: a comparative study of Article 6 and 13 agreements (Copublication with DG Employment)**

Available in EN (DE and FR to follow) €20

Cat. no. TJ-31-00-029-EN-C


• Free publications can be downloaded directly from the website and priced publications can be ordered online ([www.eurofound.ie](http://www.eurofound.ie)). They can also be ordered from your usual bookshop or from one of the sales agents of the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. (Addresses available at [www.eur-op.eu.int](http://www.eur-op.eu.int))

## Swedish visitors

A delegation from Svenska Metal, the Swedish Metal Workers Union, led by Göran Johnsson, the president, and Stig Marklund, the vice president, visited the Foundation on 21 August to discuss Foundation research on works councils and co-determination/consultation issues, pacts on employment and competitiveness and equal opportunities. The delegation included representatives from Saab Auto, the Volvo Group, ABB and Ericsson 


## EIRO user survey

EIRO users are very positive about the website and other products, according to the results of the EIRO user survey. Sixty per cent of EIRO users who responded rated EIROOnline as the most useful source of information on industrial relations, in comparison to 30 per cent who found the national press to be most useful. The sectors of most interest to users included the public sector, information technology, health and social services and the metal and machinery sector. The comparative studies were highly rated along with articles on developments on the EU level. Both the *Annual Review* and *EIRObserver* were found to be very or fairly useful by their readers. There is no major gap in subject coverage, though a few users mentioned training and health and safety issues. The survey highlighted some need for improvement in the website design. The EIRO team are now working on implementing these changes and further developing EIRO in line with user needs.


The user survey was carried out by PIRA International (UK) and the Human Factors Research Group of University College Cork (Ireland). 

## Benchmarking conference

Director Raymond-Pierre Bodin addressed the workshop, Quality and customer orientation, public labour administrations as service providers, at the conference Aiming at excellence, organised and hosted by the BDA (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände) in Berlin on 7-8 September.

The conference was opened by the president of BDA, M. Dieter Hundt, and the EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou. 

## Renewable resources

*Design for Sustainable Development: Crops for Sustainable Enterprise* has been published electronically and can be downloaded for free from the Foundation's website. The report, the sixth in the Design for Sustainable Development series, provides an overview of trends and developments in non-food agricultural crops in the EU and information about the key networks and programmes working in this area of sustainable production. It identifies productive sectors such as mould making, textiles and paper production in which sustainable fibre crops are seen as alternative sources of raw material capable of replacing less environmentally renewable sources. The authors of the report, Hans Van Weenen and Yorick Benjamin, explore the type of SMEs that might emerge from the development of these renewables and their potential benefits both in employment terms - new agriculture/land uses - and in ecological terms - less reliance on fossil-based and synthetic resources. 

## communiqué

**Communiqué** is published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Wyattville Road.

Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

Telephone: (353-1) 204 31 00

Fax: (353-1)282 64 56

The Foundation is an autonomous body of the European Union, established by Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75 of the EU Council of Ministers of 26 May 1975.

Director: Raymond-Pierre Bodin

Deputy Director: Eric Verborg

**Communiqué** is published 10 times per year. Any item may be reproduced without further permission if the source is acknowledged.

**Communiqué** is available free of charge.

Programme Manager: Brid Nolan

Editor: Felicity Hogan

Original language: English

Printed in Ireland

EF/00/57/EN