

communiqué



EUROPEAN FOUNDATION
for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Director says farewell

Although it is not possible for me to write personally to all those with whom I have shared the experience of these past 14 years, my thanks go to all for helping to make that experience so rewarding for me. The Foundation is above all about partnership and involvement in working towards better living and working conditions for all in Europe: our staff; our administrative board members, experts and practitioners across Europe and beyond, all have combined with this common purpose. It has been satisfying to see the Foundation drawing together the double strands of living and working conditions knowing that, through close cooperation with those in the EU institutions and bodies throughout the Member States, the results have led to advances in policy and to practical action being taken.

The Foundation has achieved a central place in the fields of working conditions and industrial relations, living conditions and participation in society and, importantly, in the understanding of the relationship between time spent at work, in the home, at leisure and in contributing to social well-being.

This position has been built up over the years by an international, professional and

dedicated staff working with a wide network of experts and practitioners experienced in these fields. Looking to the future - to enlargement, to new challenges - Europe will more than ever need ongoing and innovative thinking in order to face crucial issues of employment, of equal opportunities and of how to maintain cohesion in society. The Foundation has all the right credentials to make a serious contribution to tackling these challenges by stimulating open debate, providing sound policy advice and acting as a purveyor of good practice.

Clive Purkiss
Director



Director Clive Purkiss

Ageing workers

A major conference - Active Strategies for an Ageing Workforce - organised by the Foundation and the Finnish ministries of Social Affairs and Health, Labour and Education, together with the Social Insurance Institution and the Central Pension Security Institute, will take place in Turku on 11-13 August next during the Finnish Presidency.

The conference will pick up the issues raised in the conclusions of the Vienna European Council (December 1998) and the European employment policy guidelines for 1999 which emphasise the need to improve employment opportunities for older workers. The conference will look at the development of more integrated approaches in public policies to support employment opportunities for the ageing workforce in Member States. Reviews of active strategies

and their evaluation will cover active welfare and labour market policies for reintegration into employment, as well as training and health policies to maintain the employability of older workers.

Alan Walker, author of *Managing an Ageing Workforce - A Guide to Good Practice*, published by the Foundation, will give the keynote speech at the conference outlining a European level framework and rationale for policies for an ageing workforce.

Working groups will examine the evaluation of specific initiatives such as: part-time pensions; measures for the reintegration of the long-term unemployed; improved job design and working conditions; and measures for reconciliation of employment and caring responsibilities.

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Incentives for the environment

The Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, organised by the WHO, was held on 16-18 June in London. The conference was attended by health, environment and transport ministers from 51 countries who were brought together to promote "action through partnership" and to translate "the rhetoric of sustainable development" into concrete commitments and clear targets. Henrik Litske, research manager with responsibility for sustainable development, represented the Foundation which has been involved in the extensive preparation and consultation which has taken place in advance of the conference.

New approaches

The Foundation contributed its research on developing economic incentives as a means of motivating management interventions to improve the environmental health level beyond the minimum requirements laid down in legislation. Economic incentives are not new - industrial injury insurance, which uses graduation of premiums on accident records, has been used for over a century. However, there are serious inherent defects in these schemes.

Henrik Litske suggests that if reduction in injury rates is to be achieved new instruments will have to be developed which can support the companies' planning and design processes in a positive way. Economic incentives could play this role if they were correctly designed, according to Litske.

The Foundation's approach to economic incentives proposes premium graduation and is based on the calculation of both existing and future risks - enterprises are assigned a gross premium and then offered options of premium reductions or bonuses. For instance a gross premium would be assigned to enterprises operating close to minimum requirements of health and safety legislation - premium reductions can be offered to those operating to higher standards.

Specified bonuses can be centrally designed to address recognized health and safety problems in a sector and awarded on application. Individual bonuses can be given to enterprises with individual problems who develop novel solutions to these problems. These bonus systems can help address the differences between sectors and sizes of enterprises.

Guiding principles

Henrik Litske has identified a number of guiding principles for setting up economic incentives for good practice in health and environment management. Firstly, the focus should be on the development and promotion of better coordinated approaches to the uses of economic and fiscal instruments aimed at improving the working environment as well as the external environment. The incentives need to be forward-looking rather than based exclusively on claims history. The systems need to be adapted for national traditions and cultures.

Glossaries

The European Employment and Industrial Relations Glossary series has been expanded by the publication of the Austria edition. Each volume covers the national features, main employment and labour relations issues and terms current in each jurisdiction. The Austria edition, edited by Prof. Franz Traxler from the University of Vienna will be available in October 1999. The whole series of 13 volumes is jointly edited by Tiziano Treu of the Catholic University of Milan and Prof. Michael Terry of the University of Warwick in the UK. The Luxembourg edition, edited by Guy Thomas, is now available.

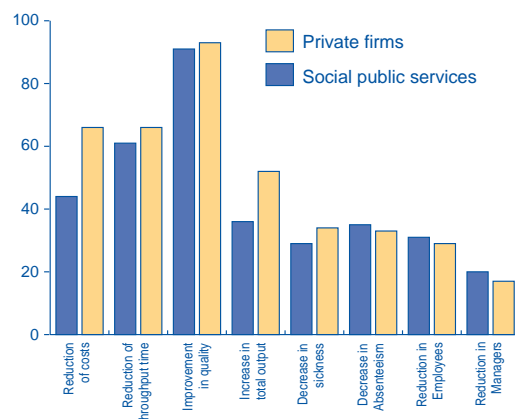
EMAS

Henrik Litske, research manager, lectured at the first international course on environmental management and health and safety which was organised by the Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health (NIVA), in Eckerö, Finland on 8-11 June. Litske addressed the participants on the EU Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), the implementation of which has been studied by the Foundation and documented in its publication - *Design for Sustainable Development - Environmental Management and Safety and Health*.

A recent report in *Health and Safety* - the UK journal on the working environment - reviewed the implications of this publication in detail from the perspective of both employers and unions.

research in figures

The effects of direct participation in organisations that use direct participation (per cent)



Source: EPOC Project (Employee Direct Participation in Organisational Change)

The Finnish Presidency

The Finnish Minister of Labour, Sinikka Mönkäre, discusses the issues that will be central to her Ministry during the Finnish Presidency.

The Luxembourg process

Developing the Employment Guidelines for the year 2000 on the basis of experiences thus far and the Cologne conclusions will be an important issue during the Finnish Presidency. Assessment and reporting of the national employment plans of Member States to the European Council is now possible on the basis of common indicators. In Cologne, it was decided that the Council, the labour market organisations, the Commission and the European Central Bank start a macroeconomic dialogue on economic growth and the improvement of the employment situation. Initiating this dialogue is one of the great challenges of the Finnish Presidency.

The central goal of the Finnish Government is to increase the employment rate to 70 per cent. The Government programme includes an extensive action package to meet this goal. The measures include easing of work taxation, investing in R&D, strengthening lifelong learning, increasing the employment rate for ageing workers, a high level of active labour market policy, and preventing social exclusion. Finland's National Employment Plan for this year is to a great extent the same as the implementation plan of the Government programme. The goal of the plan, along with increasing the employment rate, is for the unemployment rate to drop to seven per cent in the year 2003 from over ten per cent this year.

Ageing workers

The programme of the newly-elected Finnish Government includes several objectives, which aim to enhance the position of ageing workers in the labour market and encourages them to remain in work. Relating to working life development, the Government prepares a research and action programme jointly with the labour market organisations on managing in work. Social costs for working life problems related to ageing are high in Finland. Work participation decreases sharply after the age of

55, especially among men. One reason is the employers' wish to renew the labour force by utilizing the comprehensive social security. Along with this is the workers' wish to withdraw from working life, because of the increased working pace, experiences of age discrimination, and big changes in working life.

The development of integrated approaches to the demands of the ageing workforce in public policies in Member States will be



Sinikka Mönkäre, Finnish Minister of Labour

debated at a major conference - Active Strategies for an Ageing Workforce - which will take place in Turku on 12-13 August next.

Working time policy promotes working time protection, employment and diversified working time arrangements. The Government Programme aims to postpone early retirement by two to three years and to increase the employment rate of the working-age population. The National Programme for Ageing Workers (1998-2002) aims to improve employment for persons over 45 and to decrease early retirement and exclusion.

Long-term and youth unemployment

Finland has invested heavily in active labour market policy and public employment services. This year, active employment measures cover an average of 31 per cent of the unemployed labour force. All young people

who have completed comprehensive school are provided places in vocational training or in upper secondary school. This investment in active measures is clearly reflected in the reduction in long-term and youth unemployment. This decrease is even sharper than the general decrease in unemployment. Nevertheless, persons who have been unemployed for a very long period are threatened with permanent exclusion from the labour market. This so called 'hard core' of unemployed persons usually consists of ageing workers and persons with few skills. Their placement in the labour market necessitates new and even stronger measures that have to be developed across the administrative sectors. In this development, international exchange of experience is important.

Women's and men's equal involvement

Promoting gender equality in the labour market is part of the European employment strategy. Women's and men's equal involvement in working life is one of the central premises in Finnish working life. To secure this, we have a comprehensive public children's day care system. Finland has, on the other hand, relatively strong segregation into female and male occupations and this is something we must work to change. We look forward to our Presidency being the forum for promoting policies which will progress these issues. ☀

events diary

9-10 September

Seminar - The Nature and extent of Financial Participation in Europe, organised by EFILWC and the Neijmegen Business School - Leiden University. Presentation by Hubert Krieger and Kevin O'Kelly

22-23 September

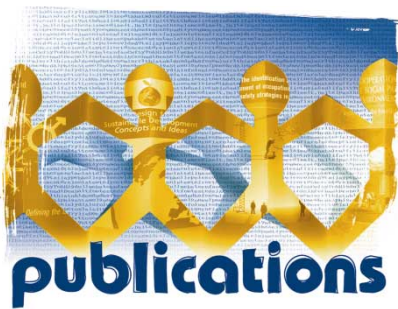
Conference - Work Organisation and Gender - organised by EFILWC - Dublin
Presentation by Hubert Krieger and Kevin O'Kelly

30 September -1 October

Conference - Gender and the European Employment Strategy - Helsinki.
Presentation by Wendy O'Conghaile

11-12 October

Seminar -Working Time in Europe - Towards a European Working Time Policy. - Helsinki.
Presentation by Timo Kauppinen



Publications mentioned

Managing an Ageing Workforce: A Guide to Good Practice

Available in EN, DE, ES, FI, FR
Cat. No. SX-19-98-617-**-C

European Employment and Industrial Relations Glossary: Luxembourg

Available in EN
Cat. No. SY-70-91-012-EN-C
€31

Design for Sustainable Development: Environmental Management and Safety and Health

Available in EN
Cat. No. SX-17-98-370-EN-C
€28

Economic Instruments for Sustainable Development: Improving the External and Working Environments. Part 1

Available in EN
Cat. No. SX-18-98-736-EN-C
€18

Direct Participation in the Social Public Services

Findings from the EPOC Survey
Available in EN
Cat. No. SX-15-98-908-EN-C
€28

New publications

Employment through Flexibility - Squaring the Circle?

Findings from the EPOC Survey
Available in EN
Catalogue No SX-17-98-491-EN-C
€28

Participating on Equal Terms? The gender dimensions of direct participation in organisational change

Findings from the EPOC Survey
Available in EN
Catalogue No SX-22-99-676-EN-C
€25

Summary of this publication

Available in EN, available shortly in DE, ES, FR, IT
Catalogue no SX-22-99-539-EN-C

• Priced publications can 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 <http://eur-op.int/en/general/s-ad.htm>)

Free publications can be obtained on request from the Foundation, or may be downloaded from the Foundation's Web site at <http://www.eurofound.ie/>

EPOC report

The Foundation has published *Employment through Flexibility - Squaring the Circle?*, a new report from the EPOC project which explores in depth the issue of flexibility in the workplace - both the numerical approach - the ability of an organisation to adjust to the quantity of labour to meet fluctuations in demand and the functional approach - the ability to deploy employees to the best effect.

The report draws on the EPOC survey results (5,800 managers in ten EU Members States) to investigate the nature and extent of a range of flexibility strategies and their relationship with changes in the level of employment. The report uses bi-variate and multivariate analysis to assess the relative significance of the individual measures of flexibility, innovation and consultation. The findings of the report emphasise the importance of introducing a "bundle" or "cluster" of mutually supporting and reinforcing practices and initiatives. ☀

ETUC Congress

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) held its 9th Statutory Congress and Exhibition from 29 June to 2 July in Finlandia Hall, Helsinki. Eric Verborgh, deputy director, represented the Foundation at the congress. The exhibition highlighted three main areas: European and national trade union bodies, innovative pilot education projects and commercial services for trade unions.

Foundation staff presented publications and gave demonstrations of EIROnline.

Research manager Mia Heikkinen addressed the ETUC Women's Conference on the key policy findings from the Foundation's project on Equal Opportunities and Collective Bargaining. ☀

IREC conference

The annual conference of the IREC Group (Industrial Relations in the European Communities) met in the Institute of Labour Economics and Industrial Sociology (LEST-CNRS), Aix-en-Provence from 20 to 22 May. The theme of the conference was *Employment Relations: Regulation and Deregulation in Europe*. The conference was financially supported by the Foundation. Speakers included Kevin O'Kelly, research manager, who presented a paper - Work Organisation in Europe - The EPOC Survey. It included some recent findings from the EPOC workplace survey with regard to levels of innovation and workplace delegation and how these impact on employment.

He said that the survey shows very low levels of innovation in European workplaces with over 60% showing little or no innovation and only 32% having 'intense' levels of innovation. He also said that the findings show that in workplaces which are innovative and where the delegation of decision-making is the preferred approach to work organisation, there is a clear indication that employment increases.

At the closing panel discussion, Eric Verborgh, deputy director of the Foundation, spoke of the changes which had taken place in Europe over the past forty years with regard to the role of social partners in European social policy. However he said he believed that the national context still remains the principle influence with regard to changes in how industrial relations are conducted. ☀

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