

European CSR news for the postal sector



The EU strategy to promote corporate social responsibility

Since communicating the new strategy on corporate social responsibility (CSR) for 2011-14, the European Commission appears to be ready to take on a more voluntary position to help create the conditions to develop socially responsible approaches.

However, in the absence of clearly defined competence on the issue, it mostly plays a role of promotion, incentive and support, with publishing guides, organising network events for the stakeholders or even assessing national CSR policies.

In spite of that, the Commission has indirect levers of action to spread the CSR concept, acting on other policies, some of which are key to the European construction. This is how, in the framework of European legislation for public procurements, a pivotal point in competition policy, the EU has adopted two directives making it easier to take into account the social and environmental issues in public contracts (see Post&You May 2014).

Besides, within the framework of these rules aimed at bringing the legislation of commercial companies closer, a highly controversial directive on non-financial reporting was adopted. It is based on the principle that the more transparent businesses will be those which develop socially responsible practices. Thus, by the end of 2016, all the Member States should have a law forcing listed businesses, banks, insurance companies and companies of public interest with 500 workers or more to publish information on their environmental, employment, human rights and anti-bribery policies. The management report will have to detail the company's policies in these areas, their results and possible incidents during the fiscal year. By virtue of the 'comply or explain' principle, businesses will have to justify why they don't have a policy on these subjects. They will also have to be transparent regarding the main risks related to these issues coming from their activity, and regarding the way they manage those risks. Such non-financial reporting will have to be substantiated by performance indicators.

European CSR policy is at a pivotal period as the 2011-14 strategy has come to an end, and a consultation will be launched in May to develop the next one. Results will be discussed in the next EU Multi-stakeholder Forum on CSR planned for November 2014. It now remains to be seen whether the future Commission will take hold of the issue and what it will do after the results of a consultation actively involving NGOs, unions as well as businesses associations, who will propose lines of action.

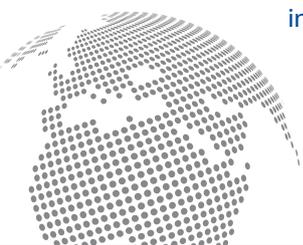
STRATEGIC HEALTH AND SAFETY FRAMEWORK 2014-2020

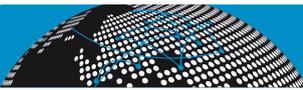


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EU & you



A strategic European framework for health and safety

On June 6, the European Commission presented its strategic health and safety framework 2014-20, which lists the big challenges and strategic objectives in this area and defines a framework of action covering its own work and the Member States.

The framework presented by the Commission identifies three challenges and lists seven major strategic objectives for itself, national governments and the social partners. The Member States will be assessed regarding these objectives via the Commission's evaluation of national health and safety strategies. The document mentions that the policies should take account of new and emerging risks, in particular those linked with ICTs, and demographic ageing, but it mostly focuses on ways to ensure better application of prevention regulations. To achieve this goal, controls over the

implementation of the law need to be improved. Therefore, the Commission is going to "map the resources of labour inspectorates and evaluate their capacity to carry out their main duties on enforcing OHS (Occupational Health and Safety) legislation" or even determine the effectiveness of sanctions and administrative fines imposed by the Member States. Simpler legislation is also presented as a way to ensure compliance. Therefore, the Commission and the Member States will have to strive to remove useless administrative constraints and make sure that current health and safety legislation meets these objectives. This assessment is going to start at European level, since the Commission promised to slim down its own regulations on the subject as soon as possible. In the end, there will be no further OHS directives in perspective but focus is placed on the European Social Fund (ESF) to support the social partners' initiatives on the subject.



A toolkit for gender equality at work

On May 7, the European cross-industry social partners presented their toolkit for gender equality at work, which gathers 100 good practices from 25 countries, either from businesses or from unions' or employers' organizations.

This joint initiative by the European Trade Union Confederation and for employers, BusinessEurope, the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME) and the European Centre of Employers and Entreprises providing Public Services (CEEP) is in line with the extension of the framework of actions to promote gender equality, negotiated in 2005. This new plan aims to report on the best practices identified while implementing this framework and spread them via a toolkit.

These good practices are listed in a database where 4 search priorities are available: addressing men's and women's roles, promoting women in decision making, supporting work-life balance, and tackling the gender pay gap.



Governments commit to good practices regarding internships

On March 10, the Labour Ministers of the 28 Member States adopted a recommendation for a quality framework for traineeships - the latest initiative adopted within the framework of the European youth employment policy.

With this action - though not binding - the governments are acknowledging that it is important to have supervision and rules to allow trainees to gain professional experience under optimum conditions. It is a compilation of best practices, such as spreading traineeship agreements, which should list appren-

ticeship objectives, and promote the figure of training supervisor, in charge of guiding the intern through the tasks they have to do.

After the internship, based on an assessment, businesses should certify that the youngster has acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications. Compliance with certain working conditions, particularly regarding working and resting time, is another key aspect of this framework. To avoid abuses, the Member States should also make sure that the duration of traineeships is reasonable: in theory no more than 6 months except justified instances.





European Posts



New agreement at PostNL

On 3rd July, the trade unions concluded a collective agreement for PostNL letter post and parcels employees, which will run from 1st April 2013 to 31st December 2014. The deal includes a pay increase from 1st April 2013 of 0.5%, from 1st January 2014 of 2.1% and from 1st July 2014 of 0.5%. Next to this the employees receive an additional bonus for the year 2013 of 1%. Other parts of the deal

include a change of the employee's own share in the pension contribution in order to keep them affordable and the lowering of supplementary allowances for work on Saturday. For workers over 60 years old, a voluntary scheme of part-time work has been elaborated. This allows them to work two days less until retirement, while retaining 80% of their salary.



2.2% increase for the Austrian Post's 19,000 employees

On June 18th, the management of the Austrian Post (Österreichische Post AG) and the representatives of the postal and telecom workers' union (GPF) agreed on an average 2.2% wage increase with a guaranteed minimum of €40 a month. For the lowest wages in the company, the minimum guarantee amounts to a 3.4%

increase. Bonuses and night work pay will also increase by 2.2%. The agreement, valid between July 1st, 2014 and June 30th, 2015, covers the company's 19,000 employees, civil servants and contract workers. The trade union GPF are happy with this agreement, which is much higher than inflation.



Second edition of the CSR good practices Brochure

PostEurop carries on its work to promote CSR within the postal sector by the publication of the second edition of its CSR good practices Brochure. Collection of best practices has been a great success. Indeed, it includes 54 innovative practices in human resources, society and environment from 24 European operators.

In order to highlight the dynamism, in terms of CSR, of operators who contributed to this booklet, it was decided to select three "Coups de coeur" (one per theme). Representatives of designated Posts will receive a trophy at the Plenary Assembly of PostEurop in San Marino, in September.

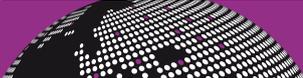


"Postal Carbon Fund", a name to remember and projects to monitor

This is the first sectoral carbon compensation Fund in the world. After four years of assessment at the UPU, the Fund was created in April 2014. It has nine founding members, including four European Postal Operators (Finland, France, Ireland and Switzerland). Carbon compensation was already established within certain PostEurop members, so it seemed natural to set up this sectoral compensation Fund with a lot of added value (social, societal and environmental). The Fund will allow post offices in developed countries to make up for their carbon emissions by funding postal projects (renewable energy, clean transportation...) in post offices in developing countries. It's a "win-win" climate solidarity system, as economic gains remain in the sector and help develop emerging posts.

The first seminar on the ageing management project, led by the European Social Dialogue Committee, was held in Paris on June 16th and 17th. It brought together representatives of operators and unions from about 10 European countries.





News from member States



First labour market

reform for the Renzi administration in Italy

The President of the Italian Council presents the law definitely adopted on May 15, as a first step towards the introduction of a gradual single contract, in other words a contract that grants workers more and more protection as they stay in the company.

Now, employers may sign fixed-term contracts with no reason for three years, whereas this maximum duration used to be one year. During these three years, employers can renew this contract up to five times. However, the number of fixed-term contracts cannot exceed 20 % of the permanent staff, at the risk of paying a heavy financial sanction.



United Kingdom :

action plan for seniors

On June 13, the government launched an Action plan called 'Fuller Working Lives – a framework for action.' It aims not only to help employers make the most of older workers' potential for their organizations, businesses and the economy but also to reduce the burden of dependency upon the government for pensions. The measures contained in the framework for action cover people, between 55 and 60 years old.

The plan provides for the introduction of a new authority in charge of promoting senior employment, the Older Workers' Employment Champion, helping older workers keep or find a job. Besides, a new Health and Work Service will target those older workers who experience challenges in returning to work after periods of sickleave. Thus, once an employee has reached four weeks of sickness absence he/she will be referred to the service by a doctor for an assessment by an occupational health professional, who will look at all the issues preventing the employee from returning to work. Employers, employees and doctors will also be able to access independent and objective advice via a phone line and website.



Bulgaria launches the 2014-2020

edition of its "Human Resources Development" program

On May 30, the Bulgarian government approved the project of the operational program "Human Resources Development" for the period 2014-2020, which is to the amount of M€ 895. Companies and institutions will be able to apply for funding of projects via this program. The main objectives are higher employment, reducing poverty and modernization of public institutions with regards to the labour market, social inclusion and health care. Possible actions that will be funded are: trainings for improving qualifications and key competences, internships, proven incentives for employers to hire unemployed people, consultation on labour and social security rights, initiatives aimed at youth employment, incentives for mobility, trainings in entrepreneurship, managerial and business skills, financial support for starting a business activity, etc.

AGENDA

- **September 29-30, 2014 :** 2nd Regional Seminar of the SDC project on age management
- **October 8-9, 2014 :** Multilateral visit of the Stress Management Leonardo Da Vinci Project
- **November 1, 2014 :** Deadline for the new European Commission to take office
- **November 21, 2014 :** European Social Dialogue Committee Plenary
- **December 4, 2014 :** PostEurop Management Board

