

COMMUNIQUÉ



EUROPEAN FOUNDATION

for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Director signals changes

Since his appointment in May, director Raymond-Pierre Bodin has embarked on a programme of meetings, starting in Ireland, to promote the work of the Foundation at all levels and to signal the changes which are taking place.

At a series of high-level meetings with members of the Irish Government and senior civil servants, the director has discussed the work of the Foundation both at national and European level. In the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, he met with the Tánaiste, Minister Mary Harney, TD, Paul Haran, secretary-general of the department and Tom Kitt, TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for labour affairs. He also met with Dermot McCarthy, secretary-general to the Government and chair of the talks leading to the national agreements and Seamus Ó Móráin, chair of the EU employment committee. During June, representatives of national governments, trade unions and employers on the Board of Administration held their group meetings to discuss the ongoing formulation of the new four-year

programme. The Foundation's own Committee of Experts also met. At a reception on 5 July, the director welcomed members of the diplomatic corps to the Foundation including their Excellencies, the ambassadors of Belgium, France, Portugal, Poland and Mexico. The director also addressed a general meeting of the staff at the Foundation on 14 July to outline his decisions for setting up new organisational structures for the implementation of the new four-year programme. ☀



HE João de Valleria, Portuguese Ambassador, and HE Henri de Coignac, French Ambassador, with director Raymond-Pierre Bodin at the Foundation

Forum Célidé

The Foundation was present at the Forum Célidé 2000, the French Works Councils event organised bi-annually by the CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail), which was held in Paris from 20 to 22 June. Pascal Paoli, research manager, made a presentation on issues relating to working conditions: the rising levels of precarious employment, the continuing differential between work undertaken by men and women and the size of an enterprise as the major determinant underlying working conditions. The Foundation organised and staffed a stand in the Espace Europe area of the exhibition, presenting and distributing a cross-section of Foundation publications relevant to the theme and the audience. ☀

Group visit

On 27 June, the Foundation hosted a group of 65 from the European Women's Foundation. The participants were drawn from seven EU applicant states and included senior government officials, ministerial advisors, civil servants and officials of organisations working in their communities. Eric Verborgh, deputy director, welcomed the group and research managers Pascal Paoli and Mia Latta spoke on working conditions in the EU and on how mainstreaming and positive action on equal opportunities have been dealt with in the Foundation. ☀

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OSHE information conference

The astonishing pace of developments in the area of new technologies is adversely affecting the way we communicate, acquire or disseminate knowledge and improve our skills and competences. Twenty years ago, information doubled every 15 to 20 years. In contrast, within the next two decades information is expected to double every 6 months.

The 4th International Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Information Conference –eOSHE World:seeing the future – was held at the Foundation in co-operation with the Irish Health and Safety Authority. Some 100 participants from 43 countries, including China and Africa, attended the conference.

Director Raymond-Pierre Bodin opened the conference and welcomed the participants and Pascal Paoli, research manager, made a presentation on behalf of the Foundation. He presented the findings of the European surveys on working conditions and their use as a tool in health and safety awareness, information exchange and training.

The conference heard that the Internet reaches some 300,000,000 people worldwide, each a potential e-commerce customer. The EU institutions are striving to create an inclusive information society. To that end, the deregulation of the EU telecommunications market initiated by the European Commission is expected to drastically reduce

Internet access costs. The EU governments are committed to making all schools accessible to the Internet by the end of 2001. However, users' empowerment issues have not been addressed properly. They are driven by what is imposed by the providers of services rather than the needs of consumers.

In order to open up access to occupational health and environmental electronic information and stimulate on-line health and safety education, there is a need for a closer, large-scale co-operation between:

- practitioners and information providers: it is important to package information attractively and tailor it appropriately to the users' needs;
- different sectors and the technology providers: it is important not only to devise mechanisms to reach the right end users but also to train users how to use new technology effectively;
- the various global actors: national governments and international organisations have a crucial role to play in putting together appropriate legislation, standards and quality assurances, and in ensuring that the human factor is taken into account in future developments.

The conference proceedings will be soon available on-line. 🌐

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Health promotion

Robert Anderson, research manager, participated on behalf of the Foundation at the 5th Global Conference on Health Promotion held in Mexico City on 5-9 June. He presented a paper on social insurance, social inclusion and health promotion. In addition, he was rapporteur for the working groups preparing the technical report, which focused upon the role of health promotion in combating inequalities in health, and guidelines for development of country-wide plans of action. Over 500 delegates including ministers or their representatives from nearly 100 countries attended the conference. 🌐

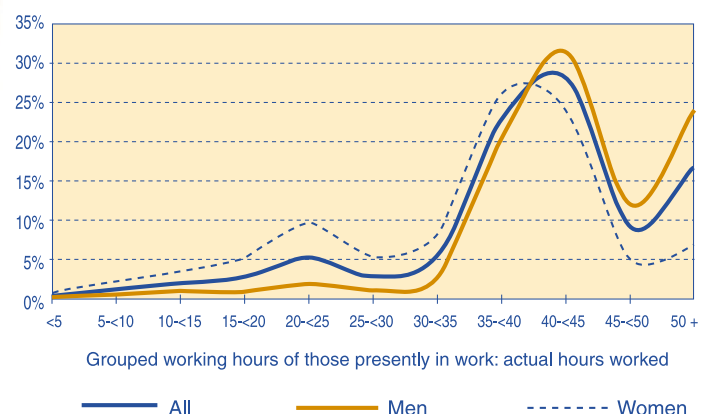
Emerging risks

Pascal Paoli, research manager, addressed a conference, Emerging Risks of the New Labour Organisation, held in Lisbon on 8-9 June 2000. The conference was organised by IDICT (Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Inspeção das Condições de Trabalho) in collaboration with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work as part of the Portuguese EU Presidency. Pascal Paoli presented an overview of new risks and policy implications of the changes affecting the workplace. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work opened the conference and made extensive reference to the work carried out by the Foundation, mainly findings from its surveys on working conditions in Europe. 🌐

research in figures

Working time preferences of those currently in paid work

Source: Employment Options of the Future Survey



Employment in household services

Who provides care for children or the elderly in Europe today? Who does domestic cleaning and home maintenance and catering? Providing household services which were traditionally unpaid is now a growing sector in the labour market. To a large extent it remains a grey area: a significant proportion of the jobs are unregulated and have a low professional status. To date, this has been a neglected area of European social policy. Since 1998, the Foundation has conducted an extensive study to map out a fuller picture of this sector. The project Employment, Family and Community Activities investigates and analyses to what extent the creation of employment in household services that were traditionally unpaid work, is contributing to combating unemployment and social exclusion. This is examined in the context of how the new employment is linked to the promotion of equal opportunities and the reconciliation of family and working life for women and men.

Pio Carotenuto, research manager and detached national expert from the Ministry of Labour in Italy, has responsibility for the project, together with Robert Anderson. 'The field has been difficult to investigate; there has been little research in the area and there is not much data. We have concentrated on the development of the sector in Member States in five fields: childcare, care of the elderly, domestic cleaning, home maintenance and catering, with particular emphasis on the first three. 'National studies have mapped out the situation in eight countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK) which cover the geographical spread of Europe. Our findings are that there is a strong demand for people to be paid to work in these jobs all over Europe; though there are differentiations between countries as to which services are most in demand. We looked at the nature and extent of the work, the quality of the jobs and job satisfaction of those working in the area.' For instance, the expansion in employment in child and eldercare opens up a range of

important issues in each Member State: the introduction of financial support measures; the means of offering training and conferring professional status; the importance of securing high quality provision with good working conditions and addressing equal opportunity issues.



Pio Carotenuto, research manager

'Working hours, professional status, levels of unionisation all indicate that this sector needs urgent regulation at national level if the employment opportunities provided by the growth in the sector are to be fully realised. It is hardly a revelation but there is a need to document the extent to which people are working on an undeclared basis; in the majority of the countries surveyed three-quarters of those in the cleaning sector are working outside the regulated labour market.

'This is also a problem because it means they have no social protection entitlements. Often, official bureaucracy itself creates obstacles to full participation in the labour market. Other problems such as isolation and atypical working hours also need to be addressed.' Traditionally, women have dominated this area of work. The high gender segregation creates its own problems in terms of pay and professional status and the reconciliation of family and working life.

The challenge is to attract men into the sector. There are several reasons why this is not happening. The rates of pay are low and there is a prevailing culture which regards

this as 'women's work'. In addition, those responsible for hiring personnel may treat men as unsuitable for tasks such as childcare, particularly in southern Europe. According to Pio Carotenuto, governments in Member States are making efforts to change these patterns. He believes that the Foundation's work will constitute a solid basis for the promotion of more policy initiatives in this sector, particularly in the improvement of working conditions and training so as to provide for better quality services.

People need to feel their work is valued. Many people who did not have an opportunity to work previously now find work in this sector. For the potential of that employment to be realised, the community needs to acknowledge the important contribution this work is making.' The European synthesis report is being prepared and will be published by the end of the year when the dissemination process will begin. 🌐

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events diary

7-8 September

Conference Aiming at Excellence, organised by BDA (Confederation of German Employers Associations) in Berlin. Presentation by R-P Bodin.

13 September

Reception for Irish MEPs, Brussels.

11-14 September

Indicators for Monitoring and Surveillance of Health, Safety and Working Conditions, Gothenburg, organised by the Nordic Institute for Advanced Training in Occupational Health. Presentation by Pascal Paoli.

21 September

Foundation 25th Anniversary Conference, Brussels.

25-27 September

Working without Limits, organised by TUTB/SALTSA, Brussels. Presentation by Pascal Paoli.



Publications mentioned

Active citizenship and community involvement: getting to the roots

Summary available in ES DA DE EN FR IT NL PT FI SV
www.eurofound.ie

Employment, family and community activities: a new balance for women and men (background paper)

Available on-line in EN
www.eurofound.ie

Local partnership: a successful strategy for social cohesion?

Summary available in ES DA DE EN FR IT NL PT FI SV
www.eurofound.ie

Precarious employment and working conditions in the European Union

Available in EN FR
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Summary available in ES DA DE EL EN FR IT NL PT FI SV
www.eurofound.ie

Strengthening and mainstreaming equal opportunities through collective bargaining

Available in ES DA DE EL EN FR IT NL PT FI SV
www.eurofound.ie

Workplace health promotion in Europe

Available online in ES DA DE EL EN FR IT NL PT FI SV
www.eurofound.ie

New publications

EIRObserver 4/00

Available online on the EIROnline website
www.eiro.eurofound.ie

Summary reports:

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

Labour market participation: now and in the future

Self-employment: choice or necessity?


Available in EN (to be published in all languages)
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The third sector

The third sector: For what and for whom?, the fourth international conference of the International Society for Third Sector Research, held in Trinity College, Dublin on 5-8 July, explored the growth of the sector at local and global level.

Speaking of the European experience, Robert Anderson, research manager, told the conference that inadequate attention had been paid to factors that support meaningful and productive community involvement, particularly in local partnerships. His report was based on the results of two EU-wide studies carried out by the Foundation, *Active Citizenship and Community Involvement and The Role of Local Partnerships in Promoting Social Cohesion*.

Overall, building and maintaining successful partnerships is a difficult process requiring considerable investments of time and resources. Effective community involvement depends upon an active network of voluntary and community organisations, especially those providing a voice for the excluded groups, according to Robert Anderson. The Association for Voluntary Action Research in Ireland hosted the conference: this is a new organisation concerned with the outputs of third sector research. Nearly 600 participants from 50 countries, including Central and Eastern Europe, attended. 

Micro firms

It is clearly recognised that more research needs to be developed on the quality of employment in micro and small enterprises because there is an acute need for tailor-made policies and strategies. To this end it is vital to collect specific qualitative and quantitative data both at national and European level.

This was one of the main conclusions of the evaluation meeting of the research project Jobs in EU Micro Firms held in the

Foundation's office in Brussels on 25 May. The meeting was attended by the European Commission (DG Employment and Social Affairs, DG Enterprise, Eurostat), the European Parliament (Committee on Employment and Social Affairs), members of the Foundation Administrative Board and the Foundation Committee of Experts. Foundation staff present were the director, Raymond-Pierre Bodin, the deputy director, Eric Verborgh, who chaired the meeting, and the project team, Filomena Oliveira, Stavroula Demetriades and Dimitrios Politis.

An executive summary with the main findings will be published in October 2000 in 11 EU languages. 


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Knowledge society

Research managers Timo Kauppinen and Christian Welz chaired the workshop on The Impact of the Knowledge Society on Living and Working Conditions and Industrial Relations held at the Foundation on 13-14 July 2000 in co-operation with NUTEK, the Swedish authority for industrial policy issues. The aim of the meeting was to identify and develop future research activities in the framework of the next four-year programme (2001-2004) of the Foundation. The discussion focused on the eEurope initiative of the Commission and technology foresights in Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Japan and South Africa.

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TUTB conference

Working without Limits?, a conference organised by TUTB in co-operation with the Swedish programme SALTSA, will be held in Brussels on 25-27 September 2000. The Foundation has been involved in the preparation of the conference. 

communiqué

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