
Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations - SDC CGA

**Plenary meeting
10 June 2016, Brussels
Draft Minutes****Present:****TUNED**

GLOOS Wilhelm	Austria
SUCHA Blanka	Czech Republic
LIIVAMAGI Kalle	Estonia
PARISOT Alain	France
SOUBIROUS Philippe	France
TSIAKKAROS Stélios	France
DOLGYRAS Ilias	Greece
PAPADIMITRIOU Dimitra	Greece
GRIECO Nicoletta	Italy
PETRATIENE Irena	Lithuania
WEYDERT Camille	Luxembourg
OUWEHAND Marco	Netherlands
BROSZOVÁ Alžbeta	Slovakia
LÓPEZ FERNÁNDEZ Jose Manuel	Spain
VÁZQUEZ FERNÁNDEZ David	Spain
BRUNZELL Karin	Sweden
LINDSTRÖM Anders	Sweden
OSTBERG SVANELIND Maria	Sweden
KEMPEN Peter	
SALSON Nadja	Brussels
HEEGER Klaus	Brussels
SMYTH Agathe	Brussels
GASSNER Diane	Brussels

EUPAE

PAPPENSCHELLER Thomas	Austria
DRUART Jacques	Belgium
NECKEBROECK Bruno	Belgium
DJIDER Nacer Eddine	France
LOREAL Simon	France
MAIWALD Christian	Germany
STAMATIKI Minakaki	Greece
FICCHI Velia	Italy
VALENTI Andrea	Italy
BOSSAERT Danielle	Luxembourg
GRIXTI Mario	Malta
DIACENCU Carmen Blanka	Romania
FORGAC Gabriel	Slovakia
SILES SUAREZ Teresa	Spain
CASADO LÓPEZ Hector	Spain

Guests / Speakers

CASAS Ramon Pena	European Social Observatory
SABATO Sebastiano	European Social Observatory
SPASOVA Slavina	European Social Observatory
VANHERCKE Bart	European Social Observatory
WILLIAMS Jeffery Dwight	European Social Observatory
JUTTE Jeroen	European Commission, DG EMPL
MARTINELLI Stefano	European Commission, DG EMPL

Apologies

ZAUCHE Dounia	TUNED / France
MOOS Christian	TUNED / Germany
AGG Geza	TUNED / Hungary
LEJON Britta	TUNED / Sweden
BROSZOVÁ Alžbeta	TUNED / Slovakia

09:00- 10:00 Separate preparatory meetings

10:15 Plenary meeting

1. Welcome, announcements and adoption of the agenda

Stélios Tsiakkaros from TUNED excuses Britta Lejon, TUNED spokesperson, for her absence today and will replace her as Chair of the SDC CGA. Unfortunately the last meeting on 22 March took place in tragic circumstances and we could not handle all the topics on the agenda. It is therefore even more important to go through all of them today, especially to adopt the new work programme.

TUNED recalls the ongoing public consultation of the European Commission on the EU pillar of social rights that runs until the end of the year. EPSU (in line with its confederation the ETUC) and CESI will respond to it. Cross-sectoral social partners are already involved through national consultations and hearings at EU level.

A second-stage consultation of social partners on work-life balance is also pending.

Stefano Martinelli from the European Commission recalls that social partners are autonomous, and thus can make a joint contribution to the consultation. The SDC CGA will therefore have to decide whether to respond or not to these consultations.

The agenda is adopted.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the last Working Group meeting of 22 March 2016 are adopted unchanged.

3. Exchange of views on EU Semester's implications for central government administrations

- TUNED (secretariat) reminds of the main objectives for this agenda item: first to gain information on the process and content of the EU semester especially with regard to the implications for public administrations; second, subject to the adoption later today of the draft workprogramme 2016-2018, to discuss the involvement of the SDC CGA in the reforms related to public administrations.
- Jeroen Jutte, Head of the Employment and social aspects of the European Semester Unit of the European Commission presents the key elements of the process:
 - o **In November:** the European Commission publishes the Annual Growth Survey (AGS), which sets out proposals and main priorities for the coming year in terms of economic governance, and the Alert Mechanism Report (AMR), which looks at macroeconomic imbalances.
 - o **In February:** the EC publishes Country reports which review in-depth the problems identified in the AGS and assess whether imbalances exist. The reports are then discussed with Member States and cross-industry social partners in Brussels.
 - o **In April:** the Members States present their National Reforms Programmes.
 - o **In May:** the EC proposes Country-specific recommendations (CSRs) for budgetary, economic and social policies. Since 2015 these are streamlined and more focused so

there are fewer and less prescriptive (they set only what needs to be achieved rather than how it must be achieved). There has been more emphasis on employment and social aspects.

Social partners can be involved both at European (for instance before the AGS, Country reports, through tripartite social summit, etc.) and national level. Some national social partners have however complained about the lack of timely consultation.

The European Commission strongly encourages social partners to take more actively part in the process by organising themselves and providing inputs, facts and analysis (but no political opinions) with a view to enhance social dialogue and ownership of the reforms. For that Country reports are key, in other words what the latter does not mention is unlikely to make its way in the CSR

- Bart Vanhercke director of the European Social Observatory presents a study made last year for EPSU which describes the European Semester's recommendations relating to modernisation of administrations, the degree of involvement of national social partners and makes recommendations for a better involvement of social partners. Between 2011 and 2013 the involvement of social partners has been very weak (mostly providing information). But since 2014 there have been clear attempts to create more structured mechanisms (e.g. ex-ante consultation by the EC on AGS, multiplied informal exchanges with Commission on country reports, etc.). The publication of Country reports has also been brought forward one month earlier to provide more time for consultation and inputs.

The affiliates consulted for this study said they had the feeling to be listened to but not heard. The study therefore also recommends to focus on the country reports (published in February) or on the AGS rather than on the National Reform Programmes or Country-specific recommendations. Social partners should for this purpose take part in meetings organised at national or European level (e.g. country desks can be directly contacted).

Mr Vanhercke asks whether social partners should bother at all about the Semester, to which he promptly gives an unambiguous answer. The Semester frames the national policy debate on key matters such as pension, social protection, labour markets, even on topics for which the EU has no competence for instance healthcare or collective bargaining. As the study makes it clear, a majority of reforms deal with public administrations except in a very tiny number of countries as Sweden. Like the Commission, he advises social partners to focus on the country reports.

A discussion with participants raises the following issues:

- legal basis for the EU Semester's recommendations and subsidiarity
- tensions or even contradictions between persistence of fiscal consolidation and recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services
- formal consultation of social partners with little effect or little influence of trade unions
- differentiated impact depending on the size of the Member States and quality of social dialogue
- responsibility and influence of Council of Ministers charged with the portfolios concerned e.g. healthcare or employment
- the overall issue of the objectives of the reforms

The Commission confirms that the treaty base is a bit "stretched" but the recommendations in the Semester have to be approved by the Council, they are not the making only of the Commission. It is important to try and coordinate inputs from social partners linking up the different levels, national, EU, sectoral and cross-sectoral. On fiscal consolidation, Mr Jutte says there is no other alternative in a context of economic and monetary interdependence.

The OSE director underlines that the role of the Commission vis-a-vis the Council is increasingly important especially in light of the negative majority voting to reverse a recommendation, even if, in some cases, the EC initial analysis does not make its way in the country report (for instance regarding a recommendation on the polarisation of the labour market in Poland). On the positive, some recommendations for instance the low level of pension income below the poverty threshold (as in Belgium) has been used by social stakeholders to raise awareness. He agrees that fiscal consolidation continues to drive the Semester agenda. Regarding the legal basis, whilst it is questionable, to focus only on the legal aspects can be limited. He disagrees that smaller countries have less leverage on the Commission than bigger ones but when social partners agree that a recommendation is inappropriate it can lead to its removal as for Sweden regarding the level of pay for the youth that was deemed too high.

4. SDC CGA work programme 2016-2018

TUNED presents the fifth version which results from lengthy discussions. The topic on youth (un)employment has been deleted as EUPAE and TUNED could not agree on a common approach to this issue. This work programme has been extended to three years to be broader and allow more long-term planning keeping sufficient flexibility for new issues.

The work programme is adopted and members should agree among themselves on who will take care of the translation.

The questionnaire to monitor the Framework-agreement for a quality services in central government administrations signed in 2012 is also adopted and will shortly be sent to the members with a revised deadline. As there is currently no funding available for its translation Members willing to translate it are strongly encouraged to do so and share it with the Committee. Responses are to be sent by the end of October and a common analysis of the responses will be made within the steering committee.

5. Follow-up of the Agreement on information and consultation rights adopted on 21/12/2015

The agreement is now in the Commission's hands. A proportionate impact assessment from the European Commission including a representativity study carried out by Eurofound are on the way. The whole process will last approximately two years.

With regards to the representativity study, a questionnaire will be sent to TUNED and EUPAE members around September-October.

A meeting with the legal service of the DG Employment took place on 4 May to explain the content of the agreement. There have been a lot of questions from the Commission, especially on the scope and confidentiality clause but nothing of a blocking nature. All agree it has been a useful meeting.

Another meeting with the Cabinet of Commissioner Thyssen (Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility) will take place on 21 June.

Official translations (agreed by both sides) are now available in English, Italian, Swedish, Portuguese and Czech; translations in Spanish, German, French, Greek, and Romanian are pending. TUNED asks whether EUPAE Belgium will also provide a translation in Dutch. Members are invited to agree on a final joint translated version as soon as possible.

6. EC-funded project on psychosocial risks at work

Members have been asked to communicate good and not so good national practices to tackle psychosocial risks at work to the project researcher Lionel Fulton (see letter by TUNED secretariat and EUPAE France as promoters of the project. For now only Germany, Belgium and Spain have sent inputs. Other member States are therefore strongly encouraged to send contributions as soon as possible.

7. AOB

No points are raised.

8. Dates of the next meetings

DATE	MEETING	LOCATION
21 June	Secretariat meeting with Thyssen's cabinet on info/consultation agreement	Brussels
30 June	3 rd Steering H&S project	Brussels
2 September	4 th Steering H&S project	Brussels
22-23 September	1 st Seminar H&S project	Vilnius
4 October	SDC CGA Steering Committee	Rome
15 November	SDC CGA WG	Brussels
24-25 November	2 nd Seminar H&S project	Madrid
15 December	5 th Steering H&S project	Brussels