

Liaison with Social Partners

Since its inception, the Centre has been working very closely with social partners and other organizations by organising a number of seminars and fora meant to generate a critical reflection on developments in the workplace. All these activities have been supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

A. Breakfast Seminars

These two and a half hour seminars were organized with the full support and cooperation of the Foundation for Human Resources Development (FHRD) and the Malta Employers Association (MEA). The seminars consist of a brief exposition of a topical issue, followed by a reaction from a mixed panel and an open discussion. This guarantees a forum of informed debate and with active participation of worker, manager and employer representatives.

In 2005 the following three breakfast seminars were held:

Substance Abuse at the Workplace

During this seminar the implications of substance abuse at the workplace were critically discussed. The keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Jean Claude Cardona, Operations Director, Sedqa. Two case studies were also presented: one by Ms Anna O'Connell, HR Manager, Activis Ltd and the other by Ms Mary Borg, Head of Continued Professional Development, Primary Health Care Department.

Activation Policy and Social Inclusion

The inclusionary impact of the activation programmes of the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) was analysed from the social and political context. The keynote speech was delivered by Mr Felix Borg, General Manager of ETC.

Consultation and Information

The main speaker during this seminar was Dr. Roslyn Borg, legal adviser at Malta Employers' Association (MEA), who gave an overview of the legislation and procedures related to information and consultation rights of employees.

In 2006 the following two breakfast seminars were held:

Social Economy – Potential for Job Creation

The focus of this seminar was on the institutions that are involved in the social economy and their contribution to the Maltese economy. The main speaker was Mr. John Mallia, secretary of Apex Organisation.

The Manufacturing Sector:

Its Sustainability and its Impact on Industrial Relations

The manufacturing sector has become leaner and vulnerable in terms of employment. Many Maltese analysts still believe that a manufacturing base is vital for the sustainability of the Maltese economy. This seminar provided an opportunity for the social partners to discuss their role in the facing these new challenges. The main speaker was Ing. Ray Muscat, Chief Officer of Enterprise Support and Innovation, Malta Enterprise.

B. Tripartite Seminars

The series of tripartite seminars on '**Current Issues in Labour Relations**' was continued in 2005 and 2006. During these seminars a foreign guest speaker is invited to act as a resource person.

Social Partnership in Relation

to Social Welfare and Wages Policy – April 2005

This seminar provided a critical analysis of the dynamics of social dialogue and the impetus towards reinforcing it by institutionalizing it. It also focused on the factors that can make social partnership an effective instrument of the sustainability of social policy. The guest speaker was Dr. Kees J. Vos, an industrial sociologist. The programme of the seminar included a forum in which a panel of key persons representing the social partners in Malta discussed the Maltese experience of Social Partnership.

Building Bridges in Health

and Safety Management – December 2005

This seminar was held in collaboration with the Malta Employers Association (MEA) which was celebrating its 40th anniversary. By identifying the common interests between employers and employees, the discussion focused on ways of designing an active management system that can lead to a cooperative policy and effective strategy of health and safety at the workplace. The guest speaker was Mr Chris Hudson, a senior lecturer in Occupational Safety and Health at the University of Portsmouth, UK.

The European Company – Societas Europaea (SE) – April 2006

As from October 2004 when the regulation on the statute for a European Company (known by the abbreviation of its Latin name ‘Societas Europaea’ as SE) came into force, a new type of supranational company could be formed. The SE Directive was transposed into Maltese law on 22nd October 2004. However the transposition of this Directive did not generate any debate locally. The aim of this seminar was to provide information about the setting up of an SE and its implications for the company and workers’ representatives. The main speaker during this seminar was Mr Michael Stollt, a political scientist working on a research network on the implementation of the European company legislation.

Saviour Rizzo, Acting Director of the Centre introducing Michael Stollt, the guest speaker during the half day tripartite seminar on ‘The European Company’



C. Study Visits

As in previous years, the CLS has organised a week-long study visit to a foreign country each year, with the kind assistance of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES). The aim of these visits is to help the social partners acquaint themselves with work related issues in other countries. In 2005 the visit took place in Germany whereas in 2006 the visit was held in Cyprus.

Study Visit to Germany (27 November - 3rd December 2005)

The target group of this visit was young persons who are actively involved in organisations that are related to the world of work. The delegation of this visit consisted of the following persons:

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| Bezzina Joellson | General Workers Union (GWU) |
| Bonello Kevin | Confederation of Malta Trade Unions (CMTU) |
| Debono Manwel | Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) |
| Micallef Terrence | General Workers' Union (GWU) |
| Pace Gabriella | Malta Business Bureau (MBB) |
| Sacco Mario | Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM) |
| Said Josef | Malta Employers Association (MEA) |

The places visited were the following:

- German Bundestag
- Berlin-Brandenburg Employment Office
- Ver-di and DGB – the two largest trade union organisations in Germany
- SMEs Association in Germany
- Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik – a research centre
- Youth Department of the DGB, Saxony
- Dresden Employment Office
- VW Transparent Factory in Dresden

The participants commented in their report that the meetings with the key persons involved in the German world of work provided them with a perceptive and insightful view of the operations of the labour market and the industrial relations system in Germany.

Visit to Cyprus (19th -24th November 2006)

There has always been a wide acknowledgment of the commonalities between the two Mediterranean island states of Malta and Cyprus. Having had to adapt to the EU rules and regulations as new member states since May 2004, these two island jurisdictions have had to redefine or reconstruct their model of self reliance. How did they cope with this new scenario? By and large this question was the focus of this visit. The Maltese delegation consisted of the following persons:

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| Balzan Edwin | <i>Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM)</i> |
| Bruno-Olivier Victor | Department of Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) |
| Cachia Saviour | General Workers Union (GWU) |
| Camilleri Charlotte | Malta Employers Association (MEA) |
| Debono Manwel | Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) |
| Farrugia Christine | Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) |
| Rizzo Saviour | Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) |
| Zammit Philip | Malta Federation of Industry (FOI) |

During this visit, the Maltese delegation held meetings with the heads of the institutions involved in social partnership, labour issues and the designation of policies related to pre and post EU accession. These included the two main employers associations in Cyprus - Employers Industrial Federation (OEB) and Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) - and the three Confederations of Trade Unions namely: Cyprus Workers Confederation (SEK), Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) and Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (DEOK). These were complemented by other visits to the Human Resource Development Authority, the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance and the Cypriot Representative of the EU Commission.

One conclusion that could be drawn from this visit is that in both countries there is fine balance between optimism and pessimism. The new types of resources being tapped – particularly the intellectual and the technological – are the new routes being pursued to overcome the structural handicaps of peripherality and insularity that tend to accompany small island states.

The Maltese delegation on a week-study visit to Cyprus in November 2006

