



EZA seminar

The social dimension of the financial, economic and employment crisis: what are the consequences for workers' organisations?

Berlin (Germany), 26-28.03.2010



This conference took place in follow-up to regional conferences which had been organised in the Netherlands, Romania and Italy. The participants tried to identify the social consequences of the crisis for workers and their trade unions and what actions need to be undertaken for the future.

Eurofedop participated with 13 delegates under the direction of President Fritz Neugebauer. President Neugebauer held a speech in which he dealt with the EU 2020 Strategy and what the workers can expect from it. Secretary General Bert Van Caelenberg spoke about the influence of the crisis on employment in the public service. First, he recalled the Eurofedop seminar which had been organised in Bratislava (Slovakia) and which had dealt with the same subject as the present EZA conference. He quoted President Barroso who had stressed that "... the social aspects of the crisis are our first concern now ...".

The governments have spent billions and billions on keeping financial institutions and the economy balanced and this has put pressure on financing the provision of public services.

Do possible solutions lie in outsourcing tasks typically done by public service institutions ? Or does the crisis create an excellent opportunity for public service reform, and can government and their public service bodies thus regain the trust and faith of the people ?

A purely economic approach to problems would be insufficient. It was concluded in Bratislava that public services have an important added value in times of crises.



Trade unions note a democratic deficit with regard to liberalisation and privatisation. More attention should be given to experiences on the ground, such as in the case of security services. Social crises can have global consequences for society.

Furthermore, Bert Van Caelenberg referred to the added value offered by public services, for example when it matters to help those who are victims of the crisis, but mentioned also the important task reserved for local administrations in this respect. He warned that "if the political powers do not succeed in imposing law on the financial powers, it will not be disorder but despair which will result from it".



Which course of action is expected from the State Authorities ?

Economic stimulus plans have to be developed at local, national, European and international level. The areas in which special programmes are required, are education, health, science and research and long-term infrastructure projects. The stability in society should be guaranteed by the development of a secure social security system. New jobs have to be created in future-oriented sustainable fields and a just fiscal system should prevent the tax exemption of companies and a complete transaction of profits.