

**MINUTES**

**STRENGTHENING INVOLVEMENT**

**BILATERAL WORKSHOP SOFIA**

Friday 25 May 2018

Venue: 2, Angel Kanchev Str.

Sofia, Bulgaria

**"Strengthening Involvement of representatives of employees in  
consultation and information"**

The meeting was attended by representatives and participants on behalf of partners' organizations – OBES, as a Lead Project partner and Podkrepa CL, as a host organisation.

The meeting was held on the following Agenda:

1. Welcome speech – *Dimitar Manolov, President of Podkrepa CL*
2. Presentation of the participants and their experience in information and consultation
3. Introduction, overview of the project Strengthening Involvement - *Konstantinos Margaritis, President of OBES & Xenia Chronopoulou, Scientific Collaborator of OBES*
4. General presentation of Podkrepa CL *facilitated by Lilyana Laskova, Expert of Podkrepa CL*
5. Introduction to information and consultation *Xenia Chronopoulou*
6. Overview of the legislation on Information and Consultation in Bulgaria – *Valeri Apostolov, Adviser of President*
7. Overview of the legislation on Information and Consultation in Greece – *Xenia Chronopoulou, Scientific Collaborator of OBES*
8. Presentation of the trade union Guide of INVOLVE project – *Xenia Chronopoulou, Scientific Collaborator of OBES*
9. Discussion & interviews – *Valeri Apostolov, Adviser of President*
10. Evaluation & Closure

The meeting started with a Welcome speech of Mr. Dimitar Manolov – the President of Podkrepa CL as a host organisation, and Mr. Konstantinos Margaritis – the President of OBES, as a lead organisation of the Project.

Georgios Tsimekas – the general Secretary of OBES mentioned the good example of Bulgaria and warned that if Greek people are not careful, they can lose everything that they were build.

Dimitar Manolov highlighted that Bulgaria and Greece are the oldest countries in Europe, that means Unity in diversity - we must be proud of what we have and remember that we are, the oldest in Europe. Multinational companies are working the same way anywhere in the world, in this sense exchanging good practices will help us. What I do not like is that trade unionism is marginalized - we participate in some things without having a direct result

Todor Kachkov made a short presentation of the OBES participants and the others. He shared the following: The battle should be common. We have to work to unite our actions for that our voices to be heard. It is no secret that officials are influenced by the European parliamentarians.

Lilyana Laskova from Presentation of Podkrepa CL made a short Presentation of the Confederation objectives, priorities and activities, related to protecting the rights and interests of workers.

Later on, Xenia Chronopoulou - Scientific Collaborator of OBES, presented the Greek and European context on Information and consultation issues and the key points in Directive 2002 / on Information and consultation and the Trade Union Guide of INVOLVE project. She noticed that the information and consultation - this a process of exchange of views and positions between the employers and employees.

She pointed out that timely information and consultation is a prerequisite for the success of the employees' involvement in the new conditions created by globalization of the economy, particularly through the development of new forms of organisation of work. As a particularly important topic she marked the timely providing of information regarding employment optimizations – massive redundancies and etc., which could influence to significant changes in the working process in the undertaking. It is important in such cases that the answers are not thrown into the air.

One of the most contested points is the Confidentiality of information. The Greek colleagues explained the Procedure regarding the cases of violation of the employer's duty to inform and consult and said that the sanctions in Greece are only € 2 000 - this is in breach of the spirit of the directive. This is not a hint, but an instrument in the hands of the working people.

Valeri Apostolov – an economic adviser of Podkrepa President, made an Overview of the legislation on Information and Consultation in Bulgaria. He presented the Bulgarian situation which covers the access to information and consultation.

He noticed that there are several main Directives of the European Union, related to the information and consultation employees' rights:

1. Directive 2002/14/EC - informing and consulting employees This Directive establishes a general framework setting out minimum requirements for the right to information and consultation of employees in undertakings or establishments within the Community.

2. Council Directive 94/45/EC of 22 September 1994 on the establishment of a European Works Council or a procedure in Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale groups of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting employees
3. Council Directive 2001/86/EC of 8 October 2001 supplementing the Statute for a European company with regard to the involvement of employees
4. Council Directive 2003/72/EC of 22 July 2003 supplementing the Statute for a European Cooperative Society with regard to the involvement of employees

There are also additional directives, as follows:

- DIRECTIVE 2009/38/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 6 May 2009 on the establishment of a European Works Council or a procedure in Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale groups of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting employees
- Directive 98/59/EC for the cases of mass redundancies  
*and others*

All these directives are transposed in Bulgarian legislation by the Constitution, The Labour Code and the new Law on information and consultation of employees in multinational enterprises, groups of companies and European companies.

There were presented and discussed specific cases of violations of workers' rights to obtain a relevant information and consultation about restructuring of undertaking or further massive redundancies.

All participants agreed that there are many cases in Bulgaria, as well as in Greece in which employers refuse to provide information to workers and these are the biggest challenges in front of the Trade Unions with respect to providing information and consultation of employees in multinational enterprises, groups of companies and European companies.

Due to exhaustion of the agenda, the meeting was closed.

Prepared by:

**Lilyana Laskova**

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**Date: 25/05/2018**