

In this issue:

- **Kick-off meeting and description of the project**
- **Expected results of the project**

Expected results:

- **Exchange of information and experience between employers in the social services sector both at national and European level**
- **Increased knowledge and awareness about the social dialogue processes in 11 European Union member states**
- **Conclusions, recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders at European level and within member states**
- **Enhanced cooperation within the sector and promotion a culture of inclusive social dialogue at national and European level**
- **Dissemination of the project results through reports and newsletters and at the final conference.**

For more information please contact :

cedag@cedag-eu.org

How is social dialogue organised in different EU member states? And what is the role played by employers in the non profit social services sector?

These are the questions addressed by the project *Promoting employers' social services organisations in social dialogue (PESSIS)* which kicked off on 9th and 10th January 2012, running until September 2012. The project, funded by the European Programme *Industrial relations and Social dialogue*, will be developed by a broad partnership of European¹ and national² organisations representing social and health services providers in close cooperation with the European trade union confederation (ETUC).

The partners want to gather for the first time qualitative and quantitative data on labour issues in the non profit social services sector from the perspective of employers. This is the first step in a process which will promote a culture of social dialogue in the sector.

Today, even though the social services make up a considerable share of the EU workforce, non profit providers – by far the biggest employers in the sector - do not have a place in the European social dialogue. This is partly due to the lack of representative employers' structures at national level with a recognised role in social dialogue. In very few countries social services employers participate in collective bargaining about labour issues.

PESSIS is the first step in a process whose ultimate goal is to set up a sectoral committee in European social dialogue representing employers and workers in the non profit social services sector. The necessary element which would make it possible is the establishment of a platform at European level representing employers in the sector with members in a significant number of EU member states.

The project begins with an in-depth mapping of the situation in 11 countries. In order to collect information on the existence, the functioning and organisation of social dialogue and the involvement of the social services sector in 11 countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, UK), the partners, supported by a team of researchers, will contact and discuss with the full spectrum of employers in the sector – non profit, commercial and public.

National stakeholders meetings, will be organised in March - April 2012, as a crucial moment to meet with all key players in the country. Starting from the subsectors well covered by the PESSIS partnership, including elderly care, long-term care, services for people with disabilities and rehabilitation, this mapping exercise will cover the bulk of all personal social services, including, e.g., the child care sector.

Information gathered during the project through the national reports will be then compiled and validated by specialist in the field, resulting in a short analytical report presenting the main findings and recommendations for action. A conference held in Brussels on 21 June will be the forum to present and discuss the findings of this major research effort with relevant national and European stakeholders the way forward.

A final European report will be produced after the final conference containing the recommendations to promote a culture of social dialogue in the social services sector while giving theoretical and practical background on *how* to do this effectively.

¹ CEDAG, Caritas Europa, Eurodiaconia, the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR), European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), SOLIDAR, Workability Europe and the European Federation of Public Service Union (EPSU).

² Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe (BAWO)-Austria, Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH)-UK, Cáritas Española, Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), Union des Entreprises à Profit Social (UNIPSO)-Belgium, Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband(AWO)-Germany, Luovi Vocational College-Finland, University Rehabilitation Institute Republic of Slovenia (URI), Panagia Eleousa-Greece; Dutch Association of Healthcare Providers for People with Disabilities (VGN); As observers: Centre de la Gabrielle-France.

