

Conference in Athens
EWC and the Labour Movement
16/05/2008

Main points

The Conference in Athens took place in the amphitheatre of GSEE on the 16th of May 2008.

In the Conference participated representatives from Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Bulgaria, ETUI and SDA. In it participated policy makers, namely Mr Telemachos Hytiris MP and Mr John Koutsoukos MP representing the President of PASOK and Mr John Tolios representing the President of Synaspismos.

There were also representatives of the Ministry of Employment, various trade union federations etc. The international representation was at a high level, including the Deputee Secretary General of the Bulgarian confederation CITUB Mr Plamen Ninkov, the President of Cypriot ETYK Mr Loizos Hatzikosti and Deputee Secretary General of the Romanian Confederation Fratia Mr Valentin Mocanu.

In the beginning there was a presentation of the positions of PASOK and Synaspismos related to the EWCs, respectively by Mr Hytiris and Mr Tolios and their commitment to sustain the revision of Directive 45/94 as proposed by the ETUC. Mr Tolios also expressed some ideas about what should be included as a must in the new directive: environment and job relations.

Following that, there were greetings of the Deputee General Secretaries of CITUB and FRATIA, representatives of GSEE and the Trade Union Federations of Employees in the Private sector and of Electricians.

Main presentations to the conference are mentioned below:

Mr Alexandre Martin of the SDA referred to the ways EWCs face restructuring and the methods of action to challenge change. He also referred to the specific cases of the multinational groups of GENERAL MOTORS, INBEV, RWE ENERGY AG and DIM BRANDED APPAREL.

Mr Bruno Demaitre of the ETUI has presented EWC court cases and the need for revision of the directive. Cases presented and analysed were those of Renault, British Airways, Gaz de France, Kuhne & Nagel and P & O. Mr Demaitre presented and exposed the positions of ETUC about the revision of the Directive.

Mrs Kazakou Lawyer of GSEE presented the relations between European and national Law and institutions and spoke about the cases of XXXXX that have come to court.

Mr Panos Katsambanis, expert of OBES referred to the experience from the operation of EWCs, both of article 6 and article 13 till now and expressed some thoughts deriving from this experience concerning what has to be revised.

Mrs Tina Gravari, Mr Nikos Gikakis, Mr Dimitris Tsoukalas, Mr Loizos Hatzikostis and Mr Giannis Mykoniatis took the floor and spoke about their respective experience by being members of either the EWC or the SNG of multinational groups such as DANFOSS, IBM, ABN AMRO, NBG, EUROBANK.

Following presentations there was discussion focusing on three main subjects:

- Exchange of experiences and ideas for the future based on them
- Lessons learnt from cases of EWCs that went to Court
- Suggestions for revision of the Directive 45/94

During all afternoon, participants had the opportunity to exchange experiences in smaller groups. There was available simultaneous translation in two languages (Greek, English).