

Sector Postal and telecommunications services

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The ILO, the Universal Postal Union and UNI Global Union jointly organised a Sub-regional Seminar on Social Dialogue in Postal Services in Francophone Central and Western Africa, in Dakar, Senegal, 23-25 November 2009. The seminar adopted a set of conclusions on a wide range of issues, including the need to enhance social dialogue in post offices.

The ILO supported a National Seminar on Skills and Employability in Telecommunications Services in Central Africa was held in Yaoundé, Cameroun (14-17 September 2009), organised by UNI Global Union/SYNACOM. The seminar adopted resolutions and recommendations calling on SYNACOM, the ILO, the employers and the government to continue support for the training of telecommunication services workers.

The ILO/UPU Regional Seminar on Social Dialogue in Postal Services in Africa, held in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, November 2006, brought together representatives of postal administrations, postal workers delegates and representatives of public and private employers from Southern and Eastern Africa.

Social dialogue at the European level in this sector has made significant progress recently. Notable among such developments is the Guidelines for Customer Contact Centres that was negotiated in the Telecommunications Dialogue Committee and the launching of a website of the European Social Dialogue Committee of the Postal Sector. Global framework agreements (that include reference to several ILO Conventions) have now been signed between workers' organizations and their employers at Telefónica (Spain, 2000), OTE Telecom (Greece, 2001), Portugal Telecom (2006) and France Télécom (2006). Meanwhile, in the postal industry, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and Union Network International (UNI) signed a cooperation agreement in 2005, to promote social dialogue aimed at the sustainable development of postal services at the international level.

Workers involved in the process of technological and structural change in communications services need to be well informed about those changes. They often need to accept the corporate strategy developed by their management, although not necessarily agreeing with corporate policies in general. Some trade unions are given access to a considerable amount of "commercially sensitive" information that is not publicly available, but many companies are still reluctant to release information to trade unions, even when such information is indispensable for workers' organizations to consider their own strategic planning.



Workers and their organizations in the postal and telecommunications services should be informed of the strategic decisions of operators, and their views should be taken into account particularly in relation to human resources issues. They should be involved at all appropriate levels of the restructuring process if the reforms are to fully achieve their objectives of efficient and quality service. The process of restructuring must not undermine existing collective bargaining arrangements.

In July 2008 the Universal Postal Union and UNI Global Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which the two parties agreed to promote social dialogue to ensure the sustainable development of postal services at the international level. Their joint action from 2008 to 2012 is focused on areas including: development of the postal sector and its repercussions for jobs, particularly in the health and security areas; improvement and development of the skills of postal staff; UPU activities geared towards sustainable development of postal services, in conjunction with other international organizations, in particular through the organization of regional seminars on the social responsibility of postal businesses and decent work; and development of an action plan and implementation of an effective promotional campaign for the IFS electronic fund transfer system developed by the UPU.

Useful links/resources

- European Social Dialogue Committee of the Postal Sector
www.postsocialdialog.org/
- Memorandum of Understanding
www.uni-global-post.org/upload/m4889a0550c2c4_verweis2.pdf
- European Industrial Relations Observatory On-line - Information on the Post and Telecommunications sector www.eiro.eurofound.ie/sectors/2_2002.html