

FACING THE CRISIS – CALL FOR GOOD WORK IN EUROPE

REPORT OF THE THIRD CALL ASSEMBLY

8-10 October 2012 – Brussels

1. Rev. Christian Popescu opened the Conference with a prayer on Ps 104.

2. Europe – facing the crisis – the question of employment

Koos Richelle, Director General, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, presented an analysis of the impact of the crisis on employment in Europe. He explained that he expects the EU to remain in a precarious employment situation for the next 3-4 years. The unemployment rates of young people remain especially worrying. 22.6% of all young people in the EU are unemployed, in some countries more than 50%. Most of the reasons for the high unemployment rates are of a structural nature, not of a conjunctural nature. Reasons are globalisation, an ageing population and a lack of sustainability.

Demographic change is increasing the pressure on EU member states' social protection systems. Today 1 million Europeans are retiring each year, in five years 2 million Europeans will retire each year.

The fight against poverty is facing an enormous gap on two fronts:

The increase of poor people from 80 million to 124 million people at a time where the national reduction programmes can only reach 12 million people.

There is a need to find a better harmonisation between austerity policies and social policies. Social expenditure is not a loss, but an investment in the future.

Mr Richelle presented the "Social Investment Package" planned for February 2013.

3. CALL – the past years

Rev. Dr. Dieter Heidtmann, one of the co-moderators of the CALL Network, together with the coordinators of the CALL working groups, presented the results of the work in the CALL Network since its launch in 2010.

The CALL Network started in April 2010 in Brussels in order to support the activities of European churches and faith-based organisations on European employment and economic issues and to improve the networking among those in the churches working on these issues.

Rev. Dr. Dieter Heidtmann reported to the Assembly on the implementation of the objectives set for CALL in February 2010.

Structures

CALL has been established as a network of Christians working on the promotion of Christian values in social and economic questions.

CALL is operational as an instrument to share and link expertise.

This has been achieved to some extent. Nevertheless *CALL* does not reach as many people as could benefit from the Network. It needs to be more widely known and all CEC member churches involved in the network.

A future task is therefore to broaden the network: to enlarge the number of active participants and in particular, to involve lay people in the network, not only church professionals.

Activities

CALL has promoted a Christian understanding of work in the society. It has raised awareness on precarious working situations and working poor in the European institutions as well as among CEC's member churches and associated organisations. It has supported CEC's member churches and associated organisations to meet these challenges through the exchange of expertise and best practice.

CALL has been very actively working on this. Klaus-Peter Spohn-Logé presented the results of the working group on precarious work. The working group developed a list of criteria for a definition of precarious work. It developed action models on Good Work in the European Churches. It furthermore developed a survey on precarious working conditions in 11 EU member states (for more information see the report of the working group).

Another example is the project on religion at the workplace run by Ian Winterbottom, which produced an informative leaflet on the way how chaplaincies at the workplace function in different countries and sectors.

CALL has promoted a more holistic understanding of poverty and social exclusion in the European Union and in the Council of Europe with their Member States from a Christian perspective, but also among the churches.

This was an important activity during the 2010 European Year on Combatting Poverty and social exclusion. Together with Caritas, COMECE and Eurodiaconia we produced a paper on the Christian understanding of poverty with concrete recommendations for the European institutions.

In September 2010 the four organisations organised a conference in the EP together with President Buzek and Commissioner Andor, where Dieter Heidtmann presented the results of the paper.

CALL is established as a network of Christians working on the promotion of Christian values in social and economic questions.

The *CALL* working group on sustainability focussed on the criteria to measure economic growth and well-being in the society. It organised a conference on the limits of economic growth, including the OECD and some of the national experts on economic indicators. It produced a leaflet for churches and parishes on the assessment of well-being in society.

CALL has contributed to the dialogue with other groups in civil society, e.g. trade unions and employers' organisations.

One example of the close co-operation with different stakeholders is the co-operation on Sunday Protection. *CALL* participated in the preparation of the European Sunday Alliance which was launched in Brussels in 2011. It consists of more than 70 organisations at present, lobbying for the protection of Sunday.

In July 2010 *CALL* participated in a conference between the churches and ETUC. However, this dialogue process has not developed and a future task for *CALL* is to re-animate it.

CALL has contributed to awareness raising and education on social and economic questions among CEC's member churches and associated organisations.

CALL has started this with the launch of the newsletter including some ethical "food for thought" and with the *CALL* section on the CEC Website. But this is an area where we initially lacked resources and where *CALL* has concrete plans for improvement.

CALL has had an impact on the development of the EU 2020 Strategy promoting a more social and more sustainable Europe from a Christian perspective.

This is the overriding objective of the *CALL* Network. In the past 2 years, *CALL* conferences have included some of the most important decision making people on Europe's economic future, including the chief-economists of OECD, the European Commission and the European Parliament. It has provided a platform to feed the concerns of the churches into the European institutions.

Conclusion

After 2 ½ years *CALL* can present some significant early results of the work done. As the network grows, it will achieve even more.

The Assembly devoted two sessions to discussing future work. They agreed that areas of work to pursue are Precarious Work, Economic Sustainability and Youth Employment.

Delegates participated in a conference in the European Parliament entitled "Facing the Crisis; *CALL* for Good Work in Europe." The programme of the Assembly, including details of the distinguished speakers, is at annex 1. The Assembly issued a statement as a result of that conference which is at annex 2

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE *CALL* NETWORK

10 October 2012

- 1 The minutes of the second annual general meeting were noted

It is hoped that discussions with the Trade Unions will resume; there is no Europe-wide employers' organisation with which *CALL* can engage effectively.

- 2 The message from the Assembly as a result of the Conference in the European Parliament was agreed.

- 3 Reports of the work of the Network since the last Assembly were noted.

- 4 The accounts of 2011 were noted.

- 5 The accounts of 2012 to the end of August were noted. Members were encouraged to ask their own churches to donate to *CALL*; even small sums will assist in encouraging other funders.

It was agreed that, in the light of the uncertainty over the future of CSC, setting the budget and fundraising for 2013 should be delegated to the Coordination Team.

- 6 It was agreed that the numbers serving on the Coordination Team would be reduced to:

- two co-Moderators
- the Working Group Coordinators
- a Budget Secretary
- a Communications Secretary
- a staff member of CSC.

- 7 The working groups met.

- 8 The following work areas were adopted and the coordination team was asked to take them forward in the most appropriate way.

Precarious work

This working group will take forward the work already planned and tasks were allocated to the various members. Their next meeting will be at the end of January.

Economic Sustainability

The work on indicators has concluded and discussions have indicated several possible areas of work. The group will meet to clarify the way forward. They hope to organise a conference linked to the Kirchentag in Hamburg next year.

Youth Employment

This is an extremely important issue across Europe but as it is a new area of work for CALL, the group were not able in the time constraints of the Assembly Programme to define a useful direction for their work. In the second half of next year they will hold a workshop in Bad Boll with delegates from member churches and young people to learn how churches are working on this issue and what young people expect from churches. A decision on whether CALL should be working on this issue and in what way will be taken after the workshop.

- 9 The following were elected to the Coordination Team:

Co-moderators; Elena Timofticiuc, Jürgen Born,

Working Group Coordinators; Klaus-Peter Spohn-Logé (Precarious Work), Kristine Jansone (Youth Employment), Herbert Anders (Economic Sustainability).

Finance Secretary; Szabolcs Lörincz,

Communications Secretary: three names were suggested, with different skills, and one person was not available to give consent. The Coordination Team were asked to make the most suitable appointment.

CSC staff member: Frank-Dieter Fischbach

- 10 It was agreed that Assemblies will be held every two years in future; the next will be in October 2014.
- 11 Dieter Heidtmann and Alison Jackson were thanked for their work as Co-Moderators.

The Assembly closed with worship led by Deacon Siw Ömelid.

Facing the crisis: *CALL* for good work in Europe

3rd *CALL* Assembly

8-10 October 2012, Brussels

Programme

Monday, 8th October

Arrival, check-in:

Maison Notre-Dame du Chant d'Oiseau, Avenue des Franciscains 3A, 1150 Bruxelles

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| 12.30 | Lunch |
| 14.00 | Opening prayer
and Welcome |
| 14.30 | Where do we come from?

Short exchange in groups: Where do I come from? What is my background for the cooperation with <i>CALL</i> and in this Assembly? What is the situation in my region/country concerning the subject of the Assembly and the work of <i>CALL</i> ? |
| 15.00 | Setting the scene:
"Europe – facing the crisis – the question of employment"
<i>Koos Richelle</i> , Director General, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission |
| 16.00 | Coffee and tea break |
| 16.30 | <i>CALL</i> –the past years

General report by the Network co-moderator <i>Rev. Dr. Dieter Heidtmann</i> |
| 17.30 | <i>CALL</i> – working groups: presentation, discussion, evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WG on chaplaincy• WG on precarious work• WG on Sunday protection• WG on a sustainable economy |
| 19.00 | Dinner |
| 20.00 | Working groups – reflections on the future work of <i>CALL</i> |
| 21.00 | Social evening |

Tuesday, 9th October [Seminar at the European Parliament, room JAN 4Q1]

- 08.00 Breakfast
- 08.30 Transfer by bus from *Chant d'Oiseau* to the *European Parliament*
- 09.00 Registration at the European Parliament
- 09.30 Opening and Welcome
Jürgen Klute MEP, Rev. *Rüdiger Noll*, CSC Director
- 09.40 **What is precarious work, what is good work?**
Prof. Dr. Torsten Meireis, Bern, Institute for Systematic Theology
Comments by two members of the European Parliament
Jürgen Klute MEP, EUL/NGL group, DE
Sari Essayah MEP, EPP group, FIN
Discussion
- 11.10 Coffee and tea break
- 11.30 PANEL I: **Precarious work in Europe – a challenge for the EU**
Jean-Louis De Brouwer, Director, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission
Jean Lambert MEP, Greens group, UK
Leila Kurki, President of the Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship section, European Economic and Social Committee, FL
Elina Timofticiuc, CALL Network, Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania – AIDRom, RO
- 13.00 Presentation and launch of the project on precarious work
- 13.30 Lunch
- 14.45-16.15 PANEL II: **Toward a concept of good work**
Richard Falbr MEP, Employment & Social Affairs Committee, S&D Group, CZ
Klaus-Peter Spohn-Logé, CALL Network, Kirchlicher Dienst in der Arbeitswelt, DE
Rudi Delarue, Director, International Labour Organization, ILO
Jozef Niemiec, Deputy General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation, ETUC
- 16.30 Transfer back to Chant d'Oiseau by bus
- 17.00 **Working Groups on the future work of CALL**
- 18.30 Report to the plenary
- 19.00 Dinner
- 20.00 **CALL Network and CSC**
- 20.45 Social evening

Wednesday, 10th October

08.00 Breakfast

09.00 Morning prayer

09.30 **CALL Annual Assembly**

- Projects
- Budget
- Elections

11.00 Coffee and tea break

11.30 **CALL Annual Assembly** (*continued*)

- Conclusions

12.00 Closing worship

12.30 Lunch and departures

14.00 First meeting of the new Coordination Team

Facing the crisis: CALL for good work in Europe

Statement by the CALL network

The third *CALL* Assembly held a conference on good work in the European Parliament on October 9th, 2012. Participants in the *CALL* Assembly and representatives of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Trade Union Confederation and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) took part in a lively debate.

After two years of analysis and reflection by the working group on precarious work, the *CALL* network wanted to confront the European institutions, to challenge them to continue discussion of this burning issue.

It could seem a paradox to talk about good work in the middle of a crisis where people are unemployed or suffering from working conditions that are becoming worse. But *CALL* believes that instead of the thought 'a bad job is better than no job', we should strive for good working situations throughout Europe. In the same way as Jeremiah called on the exiles in Babylon to plant trees, the *CALL* network sees good work as a sign of hope.

The debate that took place in the Parliament reflected on different aspects of precarious work, some of which have been on the European agenda for a while. This debate suggested several possible directions for the future.

Highlights

The report of the working group of the *CALL* Network proposed ten criteria for good work based on different sources, coming from a holistic, Christian point of view.¹ They are in line with criteria on decent work developed by trade unions and the ILO. The *CALL* network strongly urges that the criteria should be implemented in the near future.

Precarious work is never a choice, but always a burden to the workers. It brings insecurity - financial, social, physical and mental. It is a deprivation of rights. Employees and their families suffer among other things from bad working conditions, long working hours or involuntary flexible work.

Precarious work takes different forms in different contexts, but everyone has the right to good work, which should be ensured by legislation. The existing rights of workers should be implemented. Therefore, for example, labour market inspection should be strengthened in Europe. It is very positive to see an important issue such as 'a minimum wage' being discussed at the EU level.

The focus of policy should not only be economic, but also social. If the focus is on 'competition only', the social market will be destroyed. It is necessary to invest in people on the macro, meso and micro scales.

¹ <http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/social-and-economic-issues/call-network/>

It is important to learn from 'best practice', and adopt this in specific contexts. Countries with a combination of a strong social security system, high taxes, high quality of public services and distribution of income, stand out as providers of decent work and at the same time are very competitive.

One of the main conclusions of this *CALL* conference is:

Social protection and good work are not a cost, but a promising investment in people and society!

The *CALL* network asks for debate, practical action and prayer.

Only without precarious work, can there be a good future.²

Brussels, 10th October 2012

² For more information on the conference, see: <http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/social-and-economic-issues/call-network/>