



CALL

*Church Action on
Labour and Life*

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN
EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMY NETWORK

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.

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

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

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