



ISSN 2034-404X

CALL CHURCH ACTION ON LABOUR AND LIFE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY NETWORK

Newsletter December 2013

From the Coordination Team

– **Who are the Church partners or members who will receive our invitations to join our action?**

Can we reach more of them?

This was the question we discussed last autumn! Difficult indeed to know from country to country who in each Church are the experts on labour and life, and who already receives our mailings – or who does not yet!

This Newsletter is therefore not only for you who reads it first.

Please share it with more people around you, your members, your partners!

*Please also use the **flyer** from our **CALL** network: **to download click here:***

http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social_Economic_Issues/CALL/2012_CALL_leaflet.pdf

And please ask people whether they intend to:

- > Join one of the **present CALL working groups** – *See the details below!*
- > Or join in **new actions at our next general meeting** later in the year
- *And please **give feedback** about the most burning issues on which you wish to take action in the future!*

Advance notice >> The 2014 general meeting of CALL

will gather two weeks earlier than previously announced: **from 22 to 24 September 2014 in Rome.**

The focus will be on imbalances in labour and life around Europe, and how Churches respond to them. (Meeting place to be finalised and invitations circulated after the Coordination meeting next February.)

Youth employment in Europe - a challenge for Churches

The invitation to our workshop with the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe has been issued: it will take place in Brussels from 24 to 26 March 2014.

What practical contribution is needed from Churches on the issues of youth employment in Europe?

Our **CALL working group on Youth Employment** is organising this workshop with young people facing the employment crisis and with representatives from Churches to understand their mutual expectations and to identify possible ways of cooperation in addressing the issues. The aim is to exchange good practice, experiences, ideas and concrete demands and to support Churches establishing their own youth employment projects.

* ***Here is the programme from our website!*** *

http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social_Economic_Issues/CALL/Youth_Conf_2014/Programme_Conference_on_Youth_Employment_March_2014.pdf

Some 50 participants from various backgrounds and representing various target groups will be there, including church organisations with youth employment projects and decision makers in Churches who can address the issues on the “political” level and decide the implementation of practical initiatives in their Churches.

In order to bring a successful outcome, **CALL** has invited partners to cooperate in the workshop: employment experts from the EU institutions, the European Youth Forum, the Gustav Adolf Werk, Eurodiaconia, Diakonie and the Y.E.S. Forum (Youth and Europe Social workers Forum).



It is the calling of the Churches to strengthen solidarity in society and restore the dignity of human beings. In the Christian faith the dignity of a person is given by God, not dependant on work, efforts and achieved results. Every human being is equipped with capacities and called by God the Creator to serve in daily life. Therefore unemployment is not only an economic obstacle, but a far reaching impairment of a person, of his or her well-being and integration in society.

Churches can be active players in social politics, discuss with decision makers and engage in finding practical solutions to support the well-being of all generations and cohesion in society. Churches can build upon their special expertise and strengthen the hearts of people, inspiring them for God's work. And Churches can offer networks and numerous helping hands.

Economic Sustainability

Our working group is working on Churches reactions to the European crisis and has prepared on this basis [a Document in progress](#).

Your Church, like others, is invited to react to our questionnaire - to be [downloaded from our website!](#)
http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social_Economic_Issues/CALL/CALLquestionnaire_let.pdf

The crisis in Europe had a deep impact on people and thus also on Churches. Many churches enhanced their diaconal services to meet the needs of church related or surrounding persons.

In order to get a clearer impression about the action of Churches all over the CEC membership and to retrieve some of their analysis from their documents and official statements, we evaluated data received through a questionnaire sent to all CEC Churches.

Our document on *The Churches and the Economic Crisis in Europe* will note how the crisis had a different impact on the various countries, generally more severe in the South and the East than in the North.

Still, all Churches are now starting to question the economic system on its responsibility for the crisis and on its ability to lead out of it. Many address criticism on biblical grounds to the self-complacency of the major economic market actors. Some develop alternative economic initiatives based on solidarity among people and not on profit above all.

Our first overview in *The Churches and the Economic Crisis in Europe* is intended to be a starting point for ongoing discussion on this issue in the European Churches and to enhance the confrontation of the European institutions with their findings.

Those Churches who have not yet taken part in this are therefore **invited to do it now**: >>> *Make use of the [questionnaire on-line](#) – or send us simply **your comments** on the crisis.*

Dates to make widely known:

26-28 February 2014	Working Group on Precarious Work	Paris
24-26 March 2014	Workshop on Youth Employment	Brussels
22 - 24 September 2014	Next general meeting: CALL Assembly	Rome

Good Work and labour rights

As announced at the last assembly our **CALL** working group on Precarious Work has prepared action material for use in local Church activity. So **we now call and invite you, Churches and local communities, to take action locally for better working conditions** of the precarious workers employed in your local places.

A job is declared “precarious” when it does not have an appropriate length of contract, nor a living wage, nor sufficient negotiation rights, nor the statutory safety standards. Our target is to highlight this precarious work and to combat it all over Europe.

Our slogan is: **“NO FUTURE WITHOUT GOOD WORK!”**. Only good work values human dignity.

>>> See our attached invitation...

We suggest organising **locally in 2014 at least one event** relating to good quality in working conditions. It could be a *meeting* or public discussion, *worship* or prayer, a *bible study*, a group *discussion* with youth or with adults, actions to *inform* a broader public or a petition to *authorities*.

* *Material for these actions can soon be downloaded from our website!* * >>> **See first examples below...**

Churches can help to make such working conditions illegal. We hope for many local answers to our **call**.

Ethical and theological arguments were presented and discussed at the last **CALL** assembly: see the synthesis in our invitation letter. – More details to come next spring in our proposal for a *Policy Paper!*

*Template for a post card
with short petition and
addressee on the back*



Changes are needed for more support at least on following points:

- Better minimum standards for “decent work” along the ILO criteria
- Living wages, working conditions with dignity
- Equal rights, health and security
- Counselling services, legal support
- Denunciation of illegal employers
- Access to legal status for migrants
- Flexi-security policies in transitions from job to job

Good Work – Prayers, examples and reflections

Prayer on unequal working life

Lord,

Today we commit to you our concerns relating to labour and life, to people in employment ... or looking for employment!

We present to you the uneasy feelings of those with too much work, with overtime and with secure earnings, and the suffering of those with no work and no chance of any real job.

We confess before you those imbalances in jobs, the lack of sharing in employment, the hardness of too short jobs, and the pain of unemployed looking for an earning.

We also confess to you that in our society wealth is not shared with justice. And we present to you the uneasy feelings of leaders constrained to generate more profitability and to deny human dignity to their employees.

We are thankful before you, Lord, for all efforts of support and creativity benefitting to people with no secure job. We thank you for services, charities, organisations and parishes, and also groups of friends or volunteers, of neighbours or colleagues, people of good will who feel responsible for the quality of working life.

Lord,

You invite each of us to be creative in seeking solutions. Hear our prayer, our devotion, our commitment to serve you in our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, our will to make things change.

We commit to you, Lord, those for whom we try to do something, and those for whom we feel powerless.

Come and heal our society from the burning evil of greedy investment and indecent employment. Lord, come soon, we pray.

Amen

Old prayer for a day of work

Almighty God,

We thank you for the work of this day.

May we find gladness
in all its toil and difficulty,
its pleasure and success,
and even in its failure and sorrow.

May we look always away from ourselves
and see the need of the world.

Give us, Lord, the will and strength to bring
the gift of gladness to others,
so that with them we stand
to bear the burden and heat of the day.

May we offer you the praise of work well done.
Amen.

Irish blessing

May there always be work
for your hands to do...
May your purse always hold
a coin or two...

May the sun always shine
on your window pane.
May a rainbow be certain
to follow the rain...

May the hand of friend
always be near you.
May God fill your heart
with gladness to cheer you

And until we meet again,
may God hold you
in the palm of his hand.
Amen

The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** has defined **Decent Work** and set criteria for it. These have to be included into the legal basic conditions for any employment in all countries.

The framework on the “*Measurement of Decent Work*” covers ten substantive elements:

- 1) Employment **opportunities**
- 2) Adequate **earnings** and productive work
- 3) Decent working **time**
- 4) Combining work, family and personal **life**
- 5) Work that should be **abolished**
- 6) Stability and **security** of work
- 7) **Equal** opportunity and treatment in employment
- 8) Safe work **environment**
- 9) **Social** security
- 10) Social dialogue, employers’ and workers’ **representation**

“Good work” – The original Finnish definition,

revised by the **CALL** working group (2011):

1. *Good work produces things of real value*
2. *Good work respects the dignity of every human being, women and men of all ages, as made in the image of God*
3. *Good work gives service to your neighbour*
4. *Good work gives the opportunity to fulfil your vocation and to get training*
5. *Good work doesn't make too many demands on creation (minimising pollution and the wasting of natural resources)*
6. *Good work gives at least a subsistence income and good working conditions*
7. *Good work brings the possibility of influencing working practices and the rhythm of work*
8. *Good work enables adequate rest and relaxation, health and safety*
9. *Good work affirms for each member of the working community the right to participate in decision making*
10. *Good work balances family life and paid work and gives lifelong security to both women and men*

CEC and CALL
are member of
the European
Sunday
Alliance!
Work-free time
is part of
decent work.




Thomas Mann MEP



Evelyn Regner MEP

Conference Tuesday 21 January 2014

European Parliament Brussels
09.00 - 17.15 Room PHS 7C050

Session 1 Decent work and work-free Sundays in times of crisis
Session 2 Balancing family, private life and work - towards a happy and healthy life
Session 3 How a work-free Sunday enables citizens' participation and voluntary engagement

Registration at: www.europeansundayalliance.eu/site/sundayconference2014



- ***Please circulate this Newsletter around in your country and with your members.***
 - Look also at the CALL website: <http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/social-and-economic-issues/call-network/>
 - All information on the Network can be found there.
- ***To include an event or project*** in the next edition of the Newsletter, please send details to call@cec-kek.be.
- ***Donations are welcomed to allow regular meetings of the CALL Network:***
 - Please support the CEC Church and Society Commission, Brussels, with the purpose “CALL” clearly marked.

CALL is a Europe wide network which seeks to address employment and related economic and social issues from the perspective of Christian theology and a Christian way of life and to promote a Christian perspective in the debates on Europe's economic and social policies.

Our aims are to:

- support Church action on economic and employment issues;
- network on these issues in Europe;
- empower people on them;
- exchange expertise among members

Our current projects are:

1. A new working group on Employment for Young people.
2. A working group developing material on Precarious Work for a European Church action “**No future without Good work!**”.
3. A working group on Economic Sustainability preparing a document on Churches reacting to the European crisis.

**CALL CHURCH ACTION ON
LABOUR AND LIFE**

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY NETWORK



CALL CHURCH ACTION ON LABOUR AND LIFE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY NETWORK

December 2013

TO CHURCHES AND LOCAL PARISHES OR COMMUNITIES

LET'S ALL PLEAD NOW FOR GOOD WORK!

We are network members in “*Church Action on Labour and Life*” (**CALL**), gathered by the Conference of European Churches. So now we call and invite you, Churches and local parishes or communities, to take action for better working conditions of the most precarious workers employed in your neighbourhood.

Our slogan is: **“NO FUTURE WITHOUT GOOD WORK!”**. Only Good work values human dignity.

A job is declared “precarious” when it does not have an appropriate length of contract, nor a living wage, nor sufficient negotiation rights, nor the statutory safety standards. Our target is to highlight this precarious work and to combat it all over Europe.

We suggest organising locally in 2014 at least one event relating to good quality in working conditions. It could be a *meeting* or public discussion, *worship* or prayer, a *bible study*, a group *discussion* with youth or with adults, actions to *inform* a broader public or a petition to *authorities*.

*** Material for these actions can be [downloaded from the CALL website!](http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/social-and-economic-issues/call-network/) ***

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

What is “Good Work”?

“Good work” – The original Finnish definition,

revised by the **CALL** working group (2011):

1. *Good work produces things of real value*
2. *Good work respects the dignity of every human being, women and men of all ages, as made in the image of God*
3. *Good work gives service to your neighbour*
4. *Good work gives the opportunity to fulfil your vocation and to get training*
5. *Good work doesn't make too many demands on creation (minimising pollution and the wasting of natural resources)*
6. *Good work gives at least a subsistence income and good working conditions*
7. *Good work brings the possibility of influencing working practices and the rhythm of work*
8. *Good work enables adequate rest and relaxation, health and safety*
9. *Good work affirms for each member of the working community the right to participate in decision making*
10. *Good work balances family life and paid work and gives lifelong security to both women and men*

“Precarious work” is a job combining some of the following aspects:

1. Uncertainty of continuing employment (job insecurity, limited contracts, agency work)
2. Absence of trade unions and employee associations
3. Non decent working conditions
4. Uncontrolled working time (long and irregular hours, unpaid overtime, less free time)
5. Wages beneath subsistence level
6. Lack of vocational training
7. Work without any social security (concerning housing, transport, health insurance, pension, unemployment pay and other social needs)
8. No protection against dismissal
9. Insufficient health and safety protection
10. Unclear status (workfare, training, internship, apparently self-employed, absence of legal admission, absence of national documents)

Work is regulated in Europe, but due to globalisation the informal sector is taking over, and grey markets are growing. Precarious jobs exist particularly in services, food, agriculture, construction, transport and care. Migrants are undertaking a large part of this precarious work.

More precise laws or contracts are needed, but the first imperative is to apply existing rules and rights. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has defined decent work and set criteria for it. These have to be included into the legal basic conditions for any employment in all countries.

Changes are needed for more support at least on following points:

- Better minimum standards for “decent work” along the ILO criteria
- Wages for living, working conditions with dignity
- Equal rights, health and security
- Counselling services, legal support
- Denunciation of illegal employers
- Access to legal status for migrants
- Flexi-security policies in transitions from job to job

Methods

A Church action could be:

- Inviting** people of faith to meet and/or to worship on a theme of good work and precarious work (*at any convenient date or at a special date in the year: your National Prayer Day / the 1st May as Labour Day / the 7th October as World Day of Decent Work / or the 10th December as World Day of Human Rights*).
- Condemning** publicly bad local work conditions and supporting employees in precarious jobs (*with media instruments such as flyers, post cards, posters, and with a petition to local authorities*).
- Helping** directly workers in precarious jobs with social services, youth or voluntary groups (*support and counselling in alliance with non-governmental organisations or trade unions*).
- Taking a position** on better principles and standards of good work to be fixed in the law (*towards local and national authorities, members of parliaments and then at EU level in alliance with social and political partners*).

*** Material for such actions can be [downloaded from the CALL website!](http://csc.ceceurope.org/issues/social-and-economic-issues/call-network/) ***

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

It is important to advertise the event locally and in your Church.

This can be a beginning of knotting the net for good work over Europe. Thank you for starting with us!
With greetings from your **CALL** partners in CEC.

CALL c/o CSC of CEC – Rue Joseph-II, 174 – B-1000 Brussels – Tel.: 0032 2 230 17 32