

# Newsletter February 2013

## Our October Assembly confirmed and decided

**CALL** members and Church delegates came to Brussels, received and adopted reports, met EU representatives in the Parliament, and decided on future projects. Welcome to this new step of the **CALL** network! In this time of deep and severe crisis in Europe affecting so many people it is urgent to promote social sustainability in the EU economic policy. See on the last page how to support this by joining our working group on Sustainable Economy next April!

On their side our working group on Precarious Work is preparing a Church action "**No future without Good work!**" and should be ready to present and distribute the first results next October. And our working group on Youth Employment is aiming for a workshop in November. A full year of expert exchanges!

The Coordination Team has two new co-moderators elected in October:

- Mrs. Elena Timofticiuc from the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania AIDRom,
- and Dr. Jürgen Born from the German Institute for Church and Society.

They are supported by the Budget Secretary S. Lörincz, the Working Group leaders and the Church and Society Commission of CEC, especially the Executive Secretary F.D. Fischbach.

We have to thank our previous co-moderators Alison Jackson and Dieter Heidtmann for the good start of the network. Here a summary of the recognised achievements:

- **CALL** is established as a network promoting Christian values in social and economic questions. It is operational as an instrument to share and link expertise among CEC's member Churches and associated organisations, but needs to be better known and used.
- **CALL** has contributed to dialogue, e.g. with trade unions and employers' organisations, especially in the building of the European Sunday Alliance in 2011.
- **CALL** has promoted criteria to measure economic well-being in society, a Christian notion of Good Work and information on chaplaincies at workplaces.
- **CALL** has delivered the concerns of Churches to European institutions, especially on the EU 2020 Strategy towards a more social and more sustainable Europe.
- **CALL** conferences have included some of the most important decision makers on Europe's economic future, including the chief economists of OECD, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

The interim communication secretary Jean-Pierre Thévenaz – [call@cec-kek.be](mailto:call@cec-kek.be).

**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 European Church action "**No future without Good work!**".
3. A working group developing material on precarious work.
4. A working group on a sustainable economy.

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- Please forward this Newsletter to anyone else who is interested.

It is also available on the **CALL** website:

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

- If you would like an event or project to be included in future editions of the Newsletter, please send details to [call@cec-kek.be](mailto:call@cec-kek.be).

- Any donations for the work of **CALL** should be sent to CSC, but clearly marked as intended for **CALL**.

## **Short overview of EU developments**

Early December the European Commission published its annual report “***Employment and social developments in Europe 2012***”. This report highlights that we must take into consideration a more and more divided Europe, especially divided between North and South. Northern countries are affected by the European crisis, but not to the same extent as the southern Member States and their societies. It is a detailed report, very useful to get a more precise impression of the employment and social situation in Europe today. You can find it here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1774>.

In this dramatic situation we should not forget that employment and social policies are still designed and decided by the national governments: the EU contribution is restricted by the EU Treaty.

But in this crisis we find that the European economic and financial governance is developing step by step and gaining more and more influence on political debates and decisions.

Therefore the initiatives of the European institutions are of interest.

Here is just a short overview over the last few months:

- the Employment package of the European Commission “***Towards a job-rich recovery***”, April 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1270>;
- the ***Annual Growth Survey***, a forecast for 2013, with the main goals for economic policy, including employment, November 2012, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-1274\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1274_en.htm);
- the package tackling youth unemployment in Europe: “***Moving Youth into Employment***”, December 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1731>.

Frank-Dieter Fischbach, Executive Secretary  
of the Church and Society Commission

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## **Working group on Youth Employment**

In November 2012 according to Eurostat there are 5.8 million unemployed young people under 25 in the EU-27. This is more than the population of Denmark. These are only numbers but behind the numbers are young individuals facing many aspects of employment that need to be addressed today.

Due to the current crisis in Europe many young people find themselves in situations constraining them to take precarious jobs or unpaid internships to succeed in the labour market: this is prolonging their transition into adulthood and forces them to live with their parents until their mid-thirties. Many young people lose trust and are less willing to participate in society.

The **CALL** Assembly in October 2012 established a working group on Youth Employment. It is holding its **first meeting in Brussels on 18.-19.02.2013** just before distribution of this newsletter.

Gathering representatives of different generations coming from various CEC member Churches and associated organisations, the group will try to define the role which Churches and Church related organisations can play to overcome the dramatic situation of young people today and to secure better inter-generational dialogue and cooperation within society.

At its first meeting the group will outline its working plan in more detail and continue preparing its **future workshop** to be held in Bad Boll (Germany) **on 29.11.-1.12.2013**.

This workshop is designed to bring together young people and representatives from various European Churches, in order to understand their expectations and needs and to identify possible ways of cooperation in addressing the issues around youth employment in Europe.

The working group leader: Kristine Jansone, General Secretary  
of the European Youth Council in Europe

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## Working group on Precarious Work

The number of people in Europe who are forced to work under bad conditions is growing. Low wages, uncertainty of continuing employment, insufficient health and safety protection, no access to social insurance systems and no legal status (especially for migrant workers) is a reality for a lot of employees.

For two years the **CALL** working group on precarious work analysed and reflected this issue, collected and compared information from more than ten European countries. As a first outcome the working group developed from a Christian perspective the criteria for Good Work proposed by the Finnish Church.

This was discussed at the **CALL** Assembly with a meeting at the European Parliament, with some MEPs, representatives of the EU Commission, trade unions and civil society. *“Social protection and good work are not costs but a promising investment in people and society”*: this was the conclusion of the Assembly. See our report to the Assembly and the Assembly minutes (October 2012):

- [http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social\\_Economic\\_Issues/CALL/CALL\\_Assemblies/2012/CALL\\_Report\\_of\\_WG\\_Prec\\_Work\\_-\\_2012.pdf](http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social_Economic_Issues/CALL/CALL_Assemblies/2012/CALL_Report_of_WG_Prec_Work_-_2012.pdf)  
 - [http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social\\_Economic\\_Issues/CALL/CALL\\_Assemblies/2012/Report\\_of\\_the\\_3rd\\_Assembly.pdf](http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social_Economic_Issues/CALL/CALL_Assemblies/2012/Report_of_the_3rd_Assembly.pdf)

The working group met again on 31.01.-01.02.2013 in Paris and developed its projects on three levels:

- A Church action – especially for congregations and local education groups – will raise awareness about precarious working conditions in most European labour markets and strengthen the argument for Good Work. Under the title *“No Future without Good Work!”* it is planned to produce information and education material to be used in congregation worship and meetings. The basic document will be in English but should be translated into the national languages. Depending on the financial situation we will distribute the document either in electronic form only or also in print.
- Basic information is needed for diaconal or social services offering professional counselling and concrete support to workers looking for a job in a new country. The aim of this second project line is to produce bilingual leaflets or booklets with basic information about legal rights (labour law and social security).
- A policy paper on precarious work will be prepared, using our working group report and the contribution of Prof. Meireis to the October meeting in the EU. This statement will support the demand for Good Work with theological and ethical arguments.

The working group hopes to present first results of all this before the next “world day of decent work” (7<sup>th</sup> October) as a Church contribution to it. Around this date we will have our next meeting jointly with partner organisations from the civil society.

The working group leader: Klaus-Peter Spohn-Logé, Social Secretary  
of the Kirchlicher Dienst in der Arbeitswelt

### Contact CALL!

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

Please get in touch if you are interested in taking part in any of the activities of **CALL**.

One e-mail address for all contacts: [call@cec-kek.be](mailto:call@cec-kek.be)

– please put in the email subject box the name of the person to whom your email is addressed.

### Dates for your Diary:

18-19 February 2013	Working Group on Youth Employment	Brussels
29 Apr.- 1 May 2013	Conference <b>“Towards a more social Europe?”</b> preceded by Working Group on a Sustainable Economy	Hamburg, Germany
Beginning of October 2013	Working Group on Precarious Work	Brussels
29 Nov.- 1 December 2013	Workshop on Youth Employment	Bad Boll, Germany

## **Working group on Sustainable Economy**

Our report to the 2012 **CALL** Assembly, after giving an exhaustive illustration of our concerns and recommendations, closed with the assessment: *"The working group feel that they raised more questions than they answered"*. Ironically, a recent publication of the French writer Emmanuel Carrère together with the journalist H  l  ne Devynck, reporting from the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, seems to take up these lines with the words:

*"These are the questions of the average occidental person facing the performance of a financial capitalism which is obsessed by making profit, insensitive to its social consequences and to the mounting inequalities that it contributes to produce since 30 years, without any regulation. A capitalism that privatises its profits and socialises its losses, that considers the states as a soviet heredity, but counts on them when it needs their help in case of a change of winds, and that drags the occidental countries from crises to crises towards a shipwreck in which the middle class seems to be destined to drown, while those responsible for the disaster are going to be saved in helicopter."*

I would like to present this dramatic description of the consequences of neoliberal economics as a challenge to our future work as a group on sustainable economy. Its task is to raise awareness about such consequences, about mechanisms leading to them, about existing alternatives and not least about the theological inspiration for new economic guidelines.

At the last **CALL** Assembly Alison Jackson resigned as coordinator of our group: Many thanks to her for the facilitation of reflection and discussion as well as for the communication of our work to the assemblies and to Churches!

As a former group member I agreed to step in her shoes and to help in cooperation with our new member J  rgen Born to focus on a central issue and to bring results. The group is going to choose this central issue and the rhythm of its work at its **next meeting on 29 April**. It has a unique opportunity for this first meeting as it will be directly linked to the following German *Kirchentag*, which allows us to participate in a **conference on economic inequality in Europe**. See the invitation to this event below!

The working group leader: Herbert Anders, Baptist pastor and member of the Commission on Globalisation and Environment of the Italian Protestant Federation

Church Action on Labour and Life / Institute for Church and Society / Protestant Academy Bad Boll / Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag 2013

## **TOWARDS A MORE SOCIAL EUROPE? Social sustainability and current EU economic policy**

**Conference, 30 April – 1 May 2013, Hamburg (Germany), Junges Hotel**

*According to Art.3 of the Treaty on European Union, the EU is committed to "full employment and social progress". Furthermore, the social clause of the Treaties obliges EU decision-makers to account for the social impact of each policy measure. But does current EU economic and social policy comply with these aims?*

*In the wake of the EU 2020 Strategy the EU has established "Country-specific recommendations" as a new instrument of economic policy to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.*

*However, the measures recommended so far seem to foster a policy approach that puts market liberalisation first, while social issues are neglected or even ignored.*

*The conference will scrutinise the current EU social policy regime. Country-specific recommendations will be checked against the social reality in selected member states.*

*For that purpose, CALL members will share their experience at home to provide benchmarks to assess EU economic and social policy from a local perspective.*

See detailed program: [http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social\\_Economic\\_Issues/CALL/Hamburg\\_April\\_2013/CALL\\_DEKT-conference\\_30-4-2103\\_WEB.pdf](http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social_Economic_Issues/CALL/Hamburg_April_2013/CALL_DEKT-conference_30-4-2103_WEB.pdf).

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Dr. Dieter Heidtmann, Protestant Academy Bad Boll (e-mail: [dieter.heidtmann@ev-akademie-boll.de](mailto:dieter.heidtmann@ev-akademie-boll.de)).

**Registration for CALL members** (by 30.03.2013): to be sent to the CSC Office (e-mail: [csc@cec-kek.be](mailto:csc@cec-kek.be)).

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