

# Tapping the workplace productivity potential: the role of the social dialogue in promoting innovation in digital economy. Working together - Reflections on the future of social dialogue - Case Finland

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**SuSodCo 1<sup>st</sup> Virtual Capacity Building Event**  
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# Outline of the presentation

- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- Tapping the workplace productivity potential: the role of the social dialogue in promoting innovation in digital economy (opinion SOC/577)
- Current issues and reflections on the social dialogue - Case Finland
- Case: Productivity Together Programme
- Case: Construction industry

# The European Economic and Social Committee is a consultative body that represents **organised civil society**

“The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be *assisted by an Economic and Social Committee* and a Committee of the Regions acting in *an advisory capacity*.”

Treaty on European Union, Article 13

## WHAT DOES ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY MEAN?

It comprises all the groups and organisations in which people work cooperatively:

**Employers**  
Employers federations,  
Chambers of Commerce,  
SME organisations...

**Workers**  
Trade Unions

**Diversity Europe**  
Farmers, Consumers, NGOs,  
Professions, Disabilities,  
Academics, Cooperatives...

**They are committed to defending their interests and causes, and they often act as intermediaries between decision-makers and citizens.**



## NUMBER OF MEMBERS BY COUNTRY



The **European Parliament**, the **Council of the EU** and the **European Commission** are legally obliged to consult the EESC when passing new laws on a wide range of topics in the following domains:



The EESC examines the proposals and draws up **opinions** based on agreement reached between its members.

The EESC also adopts **own-initiative** opinions on **topics** members believe to be **important in the interests of EU citizens**.

It also produces **exploratory** opinions, requested by EU lawmakers when they want an overview of civil society's views.

In total the EESC produces around **200 opinions** per year.

## EESC opinion SOC/577: "Social dialogue for innovation in digital economy"

- Tapping the full potential of innovation at workplace level requires the involvement and motivation of workers, supported by innovation-friendly political and regulatory environment
- Knowledge work becoming mainstream. Enhanced autonomy of workers: a challenge to management structures and leadership methods
- New forms of dialogue, information and consultation as well as worker contribution. New participative approaches needed
- Strong work organisation structures combined with various forms of increased employee participation: good for innovation
- A trusting relationship between workers, trade unions, management
- Initiatives by social partners to enhance productivity and well-being of workers at workplace level: European Workplace Innovation Network EUWIN

## Social dialogue and industrial relations in Finland: key features in a nutshell

- Organisation rate of workers ca. 67 % (2019); declining
- Strong collective bargaining; sector and branch level, private and public, (long history of centralized negotiations)
- Key role of social partners in tripartite system: labour law, social policy (pensions, unemployment benefits), health and safety
- Collective agreements for 1-3 years; wage increases aimed around the level of exporting branches
- Official conciliation system for labour disputes



## Social dialogue and industrial relations in Finland: key challenges

- Covid 19: agreement by the central level social partners on extraordinary measures regarding redundancies and unemployment benefits.
- Flexible arrangements in branch collective agreements negotiated by employers federations and trade unions
- Further challenges/trends: digitalisation, climate change, demographic change, new forms of work, cross-border activities, organisation rate decreasing

## Facilitating social dialogue and work-place-level agreements 1

- Ms Sanna Marin's government programme: promotion of workplace level agreements in the framework of collective bargaining
- Negotiations between social partners in a working group of Ministry for Employment and the Economy
- Field study of the existing situation; how the existing potential in collective agreements for local agreements if used?
- Covid 19: boost to find extraordinary solutions in labour market and workplaces

## Facilitating social dialogue and work-place level agreements(2): initial findings of the study

- Key issues for successful agreements at workplace level: knowledge, know-how and trust. A meaningful outlook for win-win results. Courage and experiments!
- Knowledge: legal framework and collective agreements should be solid and easy to access, especially for SME's
- Know-how: need to have clear mechanisms, identified partners (management/shop-stewards/representatives of workers) with real mandate to negotiate
- Trust: cannot be created outside the workplace; cannot be imposed top-down; sometimes a long learning process with lots of work needed. Constant, open information and dialogue as a basis. Good personal chemistry helps!

## Productivity together – Productivity Programme of Technology Industries and Industrial Union

### Two main areas:

- Lean management
- Co-operation and Local Bargaining

### Modules to be chosen locally:

- Lean Management, Lean Tools
- Co-operation Development, Local Bargaining Development
- Rewarding Systems
- Flexible Working Time Arrangements
- Flexible Traveling Practices

## Productivity Together: cornerstones of the programme

- Support and know-how of both trade unions and companies
- Alternative modules for local needs
- Coordinated development projects- from theory to practice
- Systematic follow-up, documentation and reporting
- Theme days
- Consultancy, training and project assistance sponsored by trade unions and companies

# The role of digitalisation in the Productivity Together Programme

Benefits of digitalisation are utilised in many areas like

- Digital solutions in lean development : logistic solutions, production planning, data collection, automation
- Intranet based solutions for creating company networks
- Real time digital facilitation platforms
- Internet based survey tools to measure the level of co-operation

## Productivity Together: key observations

- Greta interest by the the companies and their employees in the programme
- Lean is TEAM WORK and improvement of problem solving skills of employees
- Lean means to go shorter not to go faster
- Local bargaining needs solid and mutual management
- Experimentation culture is essential in both local bargaining and lean management
- There is a huge potential to improve competitiveness just by better people involvement ond co-operation

## Case: construction industry

- Change of culture and relationship at branch level; away from “old school” conflictual towards a consensual culture
- Facing the realities of changing business and workplace environment after economic crisis of 90s
- Subcontracting, lack of skilled workers; migrant workers; new technologies
- Trust on branch level and workplace level know-how
- Good cooperation of social partners and authorities (health and safety, social security, taxation)



Thank you!  
That's all, folks 😊



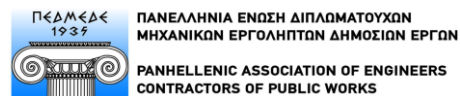


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Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia  
Chamber of Construction and Building Materials Industry of Slovenia



FEDERATION OF THE BUILDING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATIONS OF CYPRUS

European Federation of Building and Woodworkers



КАМАРА НА СТРОИТЕЛИТЕ В БЪЛГАРИЯ  
BULGARIAN CONSTRUCTION CHAMBER