

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY – AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPEMENT

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Introduction

The introduction of new technology and market mechanisms make up the basis of the so-called modernisation of public services. New technology implies a number of important structural changes with regard to work organisation, working procedures and employment forms that have an important impact on future requisite qualifications. The challenges from new technology represent opportunities as well as risks, and the opportunities hang on collective bargaining.

The main risks are:

- Bottle necks and wide scale loss of jobs
- The “chicken farm” phenomenon
- Individualization of the relationship between employer and employees, in particular teleworkers.

The main challenges are:

- To ensure continuous developing of competencies, as a precondition for attracting and holding on to well-qualified employees who can ensure good governance and first quality services
- To develop attractive work places in public services, as a precondition for the public sector to compete with the private sector for attracting young people.

EPSU/NEA’s Policy Paper on Modernisation of National Administration stresses the increasing importance of access to continuing education and vocational training for the following three reasons:

- *First, to protect and enhance employment security in a generally less secure climate. Today employment security stems as much, if not more, from equipping individuals with the changing sets of skills they need to continue to compete successfully in the labour market as from attachment to a particular employer.*
- *Second, to promote the quality of working life. Today quality of working life is a far more important issue than in the past. This stems from the aspirations of both men and women regarding a better balance of work and home life, together with their desire to develop skills and career paths in new ways.*
- *Third, to enable modernisation to succeed.*

Today competence development has become the centre of rotation with regard to employment security, the quality of working life, as well as positive wage developments. Competence development should therefore be at the core of the social dialogue between EPSU/NEA and the Directors General on ICT, but EPSU/NEA should also seek to engage the Directors General in a social dialogue on Commission initiatives regarding related issues such as the quality of work and good governance.

Proposals for social dialogue activities regarding IT and competence development, quality of work and good governance

1. Competence development of employees and the new role of management – follow-up on the Social Forum in Strasbourg

Proposals for activities:

Exchange of views on competence development and new forms of work organisation, with particular focus on flexibility and security (enhancing employability through competence development) and quality of working life (balance between work and home life and career opportunities).

Bench marking on initiatives taken by the social partners in NA in this field.

2. The Commission Communication on Employment and social policy: a framework for investment in quality (COM(2001) 313 final)

Proposal for activity:

Exchange of views on, if possible resulting in a joint contribution to, the quantitative indicators on the quality of work. The indicators on the quality of work are the new indicators that apply to the Joint Employment Guidelines and the National Action Plans for Employment, and include qualifications, lifelong learning and career development, health and safety, flexibility and security, integration and access to the labour market, work organisation and the balance between work and home life, dialogue with the social partners and participation/co-determination, diversification and non-discrimination (Deadline: Laeken Summit).

3. The Commission White Paper on the Reform of European Governance (COM(2001) 428)

Proposals for activities:

Exchange of views, if possible resulting in a joint resolution, on the recommendations to the Member States regarding good governance vis-à-vis EU policy-making and governance (Deadline: 31 March 2002).

Bench marking on national consultation (and implementation) procedures, with particular focus on consultation of the social partners (and implementation through collective bargaining).