



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

The role of the social partners in the transition towards a green economy: Two good practice examples

“Greening the labour market”

Conference organised by MEP Schroedter, European Parliament

30 June 2011

Christine Aumayr



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

- Established in 1975 in Dublin
- EU Agency
under auspices of
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- Tripartite Board
(Business Europe, ETUC,
National Governments, European Commission)



'To provide information, advice and expertise – on living and working conditions and industrial relations in Europe – for key actors in the field of EU social policy on the basis of comparative information, research and analysis'



Outline

Background

- Social partners, the green agenda and social learning

Two good practice examples

- ▶ The German “Network Resource Efficiency”
- ▶ The “GreenWorkplaces Project”, United Kingdom


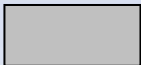

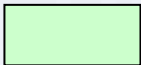




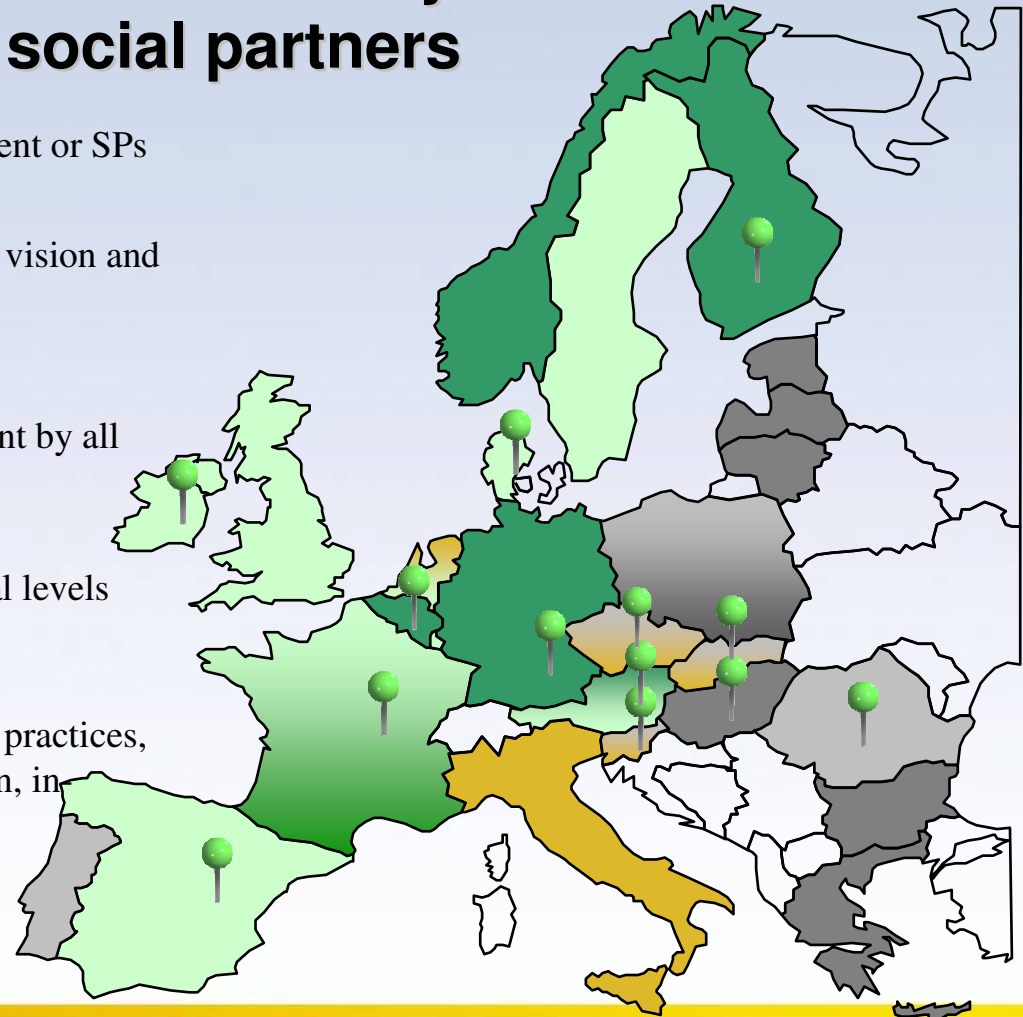
Key points

- European MS and social partners are in different stages
 - ▶ of social learning with regard to the green agenda.
- Consensual approaches foster the green transition through the identification of win-win-win situations.



Level of engagement and mobilisation by national governments and social partners

-  Absence of significant actions by government or SPs
-  Modest yet uncoordinated actions lacking vision and direction
-  Some promising initiatives and engagement by all parties – sustainable?
-  Significant practices, engagement at several levels and multi-stakeholder involvement
-  Mainstreamed policy approach, innovative practices, commitment by all parties, long-term vision, in depth debate
-  Tripartite bodies for green issues





Germany

Network resource efficiency



How to include employees in resource efficiency processes?

Green industrial relations

- “Green new deal” targets: ecological modernisation of industrial production
 - ▶ Climate change
 - ▶ Resource efficiency
- 2001: Revision of works constitution act
 - ▶ Works councils to play a role in implementation of resource efficiency
- Founded in 2007
- Actors:
 - ▶ First: IG Metall & Environmental Ministry
 - ▶ Environmental Ministry, unions, industry, sectoral employer’s organisations, various associations and researchers.

“It’s better to save resources than people”

Objectives

- “open network”: to provide information on the relationship between
 - ▶ resource conservation, innovation and employment

Activities

- particular focus on SMEs, offering support for the implementation of measures, funding options for innovative technologies, initiate links with regions and sectors,
- Conferences, expert meetings
- Information campaigns for wider public
- Internet platform (www.netzwerk-ressourceneffizienz.de/en)
- Support of research on resource efficiency

The training project „resource efficiency at the company“ (KoReBB)

- May 2008- April 2011
- Trade union initiated, DGB and DGB Bildungswerk
- Involvement of workers and works councils in resource efficiency issues -> Participation as a driver for RE
- Based on win-win-win situations
- Approx. 1000 participants; implementation in 9 pilot companies
- Training in several stages:
 - ▶ Cross-sectoral events with local trade unions;
 - ▶ Sector specific training, exchange of best practice
 - ▶ Direct cooperation with companies (9 pilot projects)
 - ▶ Certificate for employees: “Expert in resource efficiency”

Company level training projects

Two criteria

- Company financed
- Works council's interest



“not so easy to find”

Implementation of resource efficient restructuring

- ▶ Construction
- ▶ Grey water usage in replanning
- ▶ Thermal aspects, photovoltaic cells
- ▶ Green IT

Good practice aspects of the project

- Broad involvement of various actors
- Identification of win-win-win situations
- Development of involvement mechanisms
 - ▶ Employee suggestion programmes
 - ▶ Working groups
 - ▶ Regular discussions with MM on resource usage
- Overcoming lack of technical/environmental competences through training provision

Challenges

- Open network – can not reach standard of legally secured co-determination
- Interest and commitment of companies to finance training



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

United Kingdom

GreenWorkplaces project



Green industrial relations in the UK

- “Voluntarist” system of Industrial Relations
 - ▶ Joint initiatives rather exceptional
 - ▶ Fragmented union landscape
- Limited TU rights on consultation on green issues, but
 - ▶ TUSDAC: Trade union sustainable development advisory committee (since 1998)
 - ▶ TU activities (e.g. UNITE)
 - ▶ Engagement with NGOs
- Employer’s organisations
 - ▶ Some notable initiatives (e.g.: CBI: Climate Change Taskforce, FPB: “Green buying”)
- Joint initiatives
 - ▶ Forum for a Just Transition

The GreenWorkplaces project...

“... starts from the basic point that workplaces burn energy, consume resources, generate waste and emissions through travel to and from work. So the workplace is an ideal location to tackle climate change, and unionized workplaces are an ideal place for trade unions to get involved. (...)”

a TUC representative

GreenWorkplaces - Background

- Actors: unions/workers and management
 - ▶ Starting in 2006; today over 1300 green workplaces
- Objectives:
 - ▶ to secure **energy savings** and **reduce the environmental impact** of the workplace.
- Actions:
 - ▶ Staff opinions, quizzes, green fairs, courses, publications, pilot projects supporting implementation...
 - ▶ Training for TU representatives across all sectors (> 1000)
- Financing:
 - ▶ 2006-2007: Carbon Trust (gov.) and TUCs Environmental education programme
 - ▶ 2008-2010: Union Modernization Fund

A pilot project: Great Ormond Street Hospital

- 14.160 tons of CO2 per year (2005-2006)
- Target: -15% reduction (2008-2012)
- Staff survey
 - ▶ 90% of respondents showed an interest in becoming environmentally active
 - ▶ Over 50% saw room for savings
 - ▶ Few were aware of the existing green structures (environmental prefects, carbon reduction strategy)
- Green fair – awareness raising
- Training sessions: high demand
- New joint environmental committee
 - ▶ Carry out audits within departments – recommendations – follow

What has worked?

- Joint approach within a rather “voluntarist” system of industrial relations
- Exploitation of win-win situations
 - ▶ Appreciation of cost-saving
 - ▶ Stronger employee involvement
- Practical approach
- Capacity building among unions
- Future “institutionalisation” of environmental representatives? TUC demands:
 - ▶ Time-off for environmental duties
 - ▶ Training
 - ▶ Consultation on environmental practices
 - ▶ Union rights for inspection of energy efficiency
- Limitations:
 - ▶ low degree of unionisation
 - ▶ Priority of unions in times of crisis

Reports

European Foundation (2011) *Industrial relations and sustainability: the role of social partners in the transition towards a green economy*, Vitols, K., Schuetze, K., Mestre, A., Chavanet, S., Marquant, S., Poupard, J.-F., Jakubowski, A.

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1126.htm>

European Foundation (2009) *Greening the European economy: responses and initiatives by Member States and social partners*, Broughton, A.

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0908019s/index.htm>





Thank you very much.

Christine Aumayr

*European Foundation for the Improvement of
Living and Working conditions*

cau@eurofound.europa.eu

