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Joint Project of the European Social Partner Organisations;

"CEEC Social Partners' Participation in the European Social Dialogue:

..... what are the social partner's needs? "

Report of the Slovenian National Seminar

Hotel Kokra, Kranj
Slovenia

24th and 25th January 2005

Prepared by ARITAKE-WILD
January 2005

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Joint Project of the European Social Partner Organisations:

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..... what are the social partners needs?”

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The sixth in a series of national seminars¹ designed to identify the organisational and individual characteristics that will enable the attendees and their organisations to participate effectively in the European Social Dialogue was held in Slovenia on 24th and 25th January 2005. The objectives for the Slovenian social partners during the two-day event were:

- To identify the characteristics of organisations and individuals that will contribute most effectively to the European Social Dialogue;
- To develop individual social partner organisation and joint action plans to assure maximum effectiveness of their participation in the European Social Dialogue process following their accession to the European Union on 1st May 2004.

The seminar was attended by representatives of Slovenian employers' organisations and trade unions; representatives from the European social partners UNICE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC; and experts. The full attendance list for the seminar is attached as appendix one.

The seminar methodology was designed to assure maximum participation of the Slovenian trade unions and employers with “added value” input from the participants from the European social partner organisations and the experts. Most of the event involved discussions in small working groups with regular plenary feedback forums and consensus building sessions. To further facilitate the generation and development of ideas and strategies, the working groups were conducted in the Slovenian language with “non-intrusive” interpretation available to the European social partner participants and experts. Full simultaneous interpretation was provided in the plenary sessions.

Additionally, and in order to maximise bipartite discussion, agreement and action planning, where discussions took place in working groups, three groups were used:

¹ The first five seminars belonged to a pilot project of 5 accession countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia) and which has since been expanded to further include Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia.

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One contained exclusively trade union representatives; a second contained exclusively employers' organisation representatives and the third group was of "mixed" composition. The outputs of all three groups were presented and discussed in plenary.

Day one of the seminar was devoted to identifying the most important characteristics, actions and behaviours that will lead to more successful participation in the European Social Dialogue for the Slovenian social partners. Through successive combinations of working groups, feedback forums, expert input and consensus building sessions, the participants were encouraged to develop a short list of key issues that they believed would have to be addressed. Day two was devoted to the development of individual social partner and joint action plans for each priority issue that will speed the transition and maximise the effectiveness of the Slovenian social partners in the European Social Dialogue.

This report follows the format of the seminar agenda, providing an overview report of each of the eight working sessions, and culminating in the agreed action plan that was the outcome of the final working session. The detailed agenda for the meeting is included as appendix two but the eight working sessions making up the seminar can be summarised as follows;

Outline session content		Nature of the session
Session one	"Explaining the European Social Dialogue".	Expert input - plenary
Session two	"Building successful organisations and individuals for European Social Dialogue".	Working groups
Session three	Working group feedback. "Building successful organisations and individuals for European Social Dialogue".	Plenary presentations
Session four	"Successful social partners and successful meetings" – presentation of research findings.	Expert input - plenary
Session five	"The characteristics, actions and behaviours that contribute to successful engagement in social partnership".	Consensus building session – plenary.
Session six	"Action plan development on the agreed priority issues"	Working groups
Session seven	Working group feedback. "Action plan development on the agreed priority issues"	Plenary presentations
Session eight	Discussion and agreement on specific action plans	Consensus building session – plenary.

DAY ONE (24th January)

Session one (Expert input)

Explaining the European Social Dialogue

The history, evolution, participants, working rules, practices and priorities of the European Social Dialogue were summarised in formal presentations given by one of the seminar experts (Alan Wild) and Jeanne Schmitt of UNICE Social Affairs. These presentations are attached as appendices three and four respectively. Additionally, each of the representatives of the European social partners; Juliane Bir of ETUC; Lilliane Volozinskis of UEAPME; and Valeria Ronzitti of CEEP commented briefly on the similarities and differences in the approaches of their respective organisations to the development of negotiating positions, the sign-off process for agreements and methods of communication and implementation.

At the end of session one, the Slovenian social partners were left with a series of specific questions for consideration during the course of the seminar;

- How will they organise member discussions and convey input to consultations?
- How will they prepare technical input for negotiating mandates?
- How will they get this mandate approved?
- How will they liaise with each other?
- How will they explain compromises to members?
- How will they organise follow up procedures?

Session two (Working group activity)

"Building successful organisations and individuals for European Social Dialogue"

The national representatives were divided into three working groups: A "trade union group"; an "employers' organisation group" and a "joint group" of trade union and employers' organisation participants. The representatives from UNICE and UEAPME joined the employers' organisation group; a representative from the ETUC together with one expert joined the trade union group; and representatives from ETUC and CEEP,

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together with one expert, joined the “joint group”. A chairperson/rapporteur was selected by each group from amongst the national participants.

The working groups were given 90 minutes to consider the following questions;

- *What do we need to do to build successful social dialogue partner organisations at the national level that are capable of contributing effectively to the European Social Dialogue? (Trade union and employers' organisation groups)*
- *What are the actions and behaviours that will make our meetings together as successful as possible? (Joint group)*

Session three (Working group feedback)

“Building successful organisations and individuals for European Social Dialogue”

The report back from the three groups covered the following issues;

Trade Union Group

- ❖ The representivity of social partner organisations needs to be improved;
- ❖ Both the Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations need to be better organised amongst themselves and together;
- ❖ A clearer understanding of European level procedures is required;
- ❖ There is a need to be more efficient and effective if procedures are to be followed on time;
- ❖ A Slovenian “intra-trade union group”, dedicated to social dialogue at the EU level needs to be established;
- ❖ A good system of information transfer and flow must be developed;
- ❖ The involvement of the most affected groups/members needs to be assured.

Employers' Organisation Group

- ❖ There is need for increased cooperation at the national level in order to be able to present a common voice.
- ❖ More effective representation at the EU level needs to be developed;
- ❖ AES and the Chamber of Crafts can lobby through UNICE and UEAPME respectively;

Joint Group

- ❖ Capacity building is needed in order to develop the right expertise within both Trade Unions and Employers Organisations;
- ❖ Higher levels of cooperation to identify and exploit synergies between the social partners are needed;
- ❖ The speed and efficiency of information flows should be improved;
- ❖ Common areas of interest and potential synergies should be identified;
- ❖ Processes for working together at the European level need to be found;
- ❖ Possibilities of sharing resources/knowledge should be explored;
- ❖ Bipartite structures and processes need to be improved.

Session four (Expert input)

“Successful social partners and successful meetings” – presentation of research findings

One of the seminar experts (Alan Wild) presented the findings from a small research project conducted specifically for this series of national seminars. 14 currently active members of the European Social Dialogue, eight trade union members and six employer members, from the “European 15” were asked the following questions relating to the organisational characteristics of “more” and “less” successful organisations and the actions and behaviours of “more” and “less” successful individuals.

Could you tell me, in your experience, what are the characteristics of the successful social partner at the European level? Could you list three or four characteristics of successful social partner organisations?

Could you tell me, in your experience, what are the characteristics of the least successful social partners at the European level. Could you list three or four characteristics of the least successful social partner organisations?

*Turning now to behaviours. Can you tell me what are the most important actions and behaviours that make **individuals** more or less successful in the European social dialogue?*

*Are there any behaviours or actions that make particular **national delegations** (employers and trade unions together) more or less successful?*

The purpose of this session was to allow the participants to review their own discussions and presentations from session three and four in the context of the knowledge and experience of individuals from different countries that had participated in the European Social Dialogue over a number of years. The full presentation is attached to this report as appendix five.

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In summary, the following factors were identified in the research.

Characteristics of the "most successful" social partner organisations	Characteristics of "less successful" social partner organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Social dialogue is taken seriously; ✓ One or two individuals given clear responsibility for the social dialogue; ✓ Continuity of representation; ✓ Representatives are credible at the national level; ✓ Strong links between national and international activities; ✓ Clear process for mandate development; ✓ Clear process for reporting back; ✓ Processes for implementing agreements; ✓ Dedication of sufficient resources – admin, research and IT; ✓ Permanent Brussels presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Lack of priority or interest in the social dialogue; ✗ Lack of clarity in who represents the organisation; ✗ Lack of delegation of authority – too many referrals to national HQ; ✗ Low credibility – nationally or at the European level; ✗ Changes in representation from meeting to meeting; ✗ Lack of processes for producing a clear mandate, reporting back or implementation; ✗ Over-political organisations/stances – lack of independence, influence of "party politics"; ✗ Poor electronic communication media; ✗ Lack of visibility in Brussels.
Actions/Behaviours of the "most successful" individuals	Actions/Behaviours of "less successful" individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Interested in and motivated by subject; ✓ Preparedness to research and learn; ✓ Patience!; ✓ Language skills; ✓ Good listening skills; ✓ Working outside of the formal meetings – 10% inside, 90% outside; ✓ Strong networker; ✓ Cultural awareness and sensitivity; ✓ Awareness of other country conditions; ✓ Awareness of views of other national social partner; ✓ Strong IT skills; ✓ "European" thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ No experience in collective bargaining; ✗ Lack of language skills; ✗ Lack of interest; ✗ Political operators; ✗ Dishonesty; ✗ Nationalistic approaches; ✗ Speaking to get their names in the minutes; ✗ Internet illiterate; ✗ Poor networker; ✗ Inability to work effectively outside formal meetings; ✗ Lack of closeness to the other national social partner; ✗ "9 to 5" workers.

Session five (Consensus building session)

The characteristics, actions and behaviours that contribute to successful engagement in social partnership.

Each individual was asked to consider, in the light of sessions four and five, what they considered to be the most important issues to have emerged from the discussion. During a “tour de table” exercise involving the national participants and the following “long-list” of issues emerged. The list below is exactly that recorded in the meeting. It is not in any priority order and reflects only the order in which the subjects were mentioned. It does not reflect “multiple mentions” of issues.

- ❖ Identify questions of common relevance;
- ❖ Form common standpoints and arguments in a more effective way;
- ❖ Improve expertise in order to ensure justification of arguments;
- ❖ Present positions in a manner that others can relate to (for example reflecting European thinking);
- ❖ Arguments need to be presented in terms of effects rather than desired organisational achievements;
- ❖ Continuous awareness of other social partners position on issues on the agenda;
- ❖ Arguments need to be based on accurate and detailed information;
- ❖ Improve access to information to provide a substantive base for arguments;
- ❖ A permanent presence in Brussels would be extremely useful;
- ❖ Highly developed formal and informal networks need to be built;
- ❖ Minimise the disadvantages stemming from compulsory membership of the Chambers;
- ❖ Take tasks and responsibilities seriously;
- ❖ Assure efficient information flows within and between different organisations including between the different levels of organisations;
- ❖ Make use of all existing social dialogue forums;
- ❖ Consider how positions are communicated in the public arena;
- ❖ Improve communication;
- ❖ Assure strong links between national and international activities;
- ❖ Ensure adequate and appropriate resources are devoted to the EU social dialogue;
- ❖ Need for a good group of experts;
- ❖ Need for clear process for mandate development;
- ❖ Clear processes for reporting need to be established;
- ❖ Need for processes that assure implementation of agreements reached;
- ❖ Importance of the human component i.e. the skills and experience of those representing the Slovenian social partners in Europe;
- ❖ Those involved need to be personally committed;
- ❖ The European dimension needs to be reflected at national level;
- ❖ Those involved need to be socially adept and get along with people in and outside meetings;
- ❖ Organisations must take social dialogue seriously;
- ❖ Links between Employer Organisations must be improved, building on the role of the organisations affiliated to UNICE and UEAPME;

- ❖ Links between Trade Unions and affiliates must be improved, compared to the present situation where only one out of six Slovenian trade unions is affiliated to ETUC;
- ❖ Tolerant and patient attitudes need to be adopted;
- ❖ Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations should support each other;
- ❖ There is a need to organise those groups not yet represented;
- ❖ Social partners need to get to a position where we can take initiatives and make demands;
- ❖ Simply defending national positions is not an option;
- ❖ Clearly defined mandate(s);
- ❖ Be action oriented;
- ❖ Need to identify who has the mandate on each issue;
- ❖ Human resources – competent staff with appropriate skills;
- ❖ Be prepared and able to provide quick reactions;
- ❖ Need to be well organised horizontally and vertically;
- ❖ Members of the negotiation team have to be chosen carefully due to their importance;
- ❖ Negotiation skills and tactics will be important;
- ❖ Communication of arguments/positions;
- ❖ Communication from bottom up must be encouraged;
- ❖ Learn from others - don't reinvent the wheel;
- ❖ Mutual respect between the social partners will be important;
- ❖ A good understanding of the issues is crucial;
- ❖ Ability to distinguish between issues of European interest and national interest is important;
- ❖ Must be able to bring interests together where possible.

Following the national participant "tour de table", the experts were asked to give their views on what they considered to be the most important priorities for the Slovenian social partners. In this short session, the experts and European level social partners made the following points;

- To be strong, effective and make your voice heard you need to be well organised. You need to make sure your members are aware of the issues so they understand why you are involved in order that they can make appropriate inputs and participate in implementation.
- The social partners have a role to play both in training and awareness-raising. This seminar provides an opportunity for you to receive information that you can then disseminate. Training is important not least in relation to social dialogue and also the language skills that are crucial. The EU training college provides a course on social dialogue that may be of interest. In relation to language skills, building the right team - combining age and experience with youth and the language skills that often come with that - can be part of the solution.

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- Slovenia's national background leaves the country well placed to participate in European level social dialogue. However many questions have nevertheless been raised. Do not forget the various organisations represented at this seminar that can support you in relation to developing your mandates and your procedures and improving information flows.
- A good level of understanding between Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations is crucial. You need to be able to come to compromises working in good faith and trust. Those organisations that are not members of European level social partners need to be involved at the national level. A cohesive national position is important.
- You need to prepare a realistic action plan that takes into consideration existing structures, possibilities and limitations. Examine how the functioning of present structures can be improved for example. A major issue is the information flow and part of this relates to language. Those organisations not represented at European level should try to work with those who do and create a common channel to the European level.
- With the support of the European Commission, the European level social partners have undertaken a series of actions that relate to some of the comments made. These include; a workshop on how to apply for funding for social dialogue related initiatives; a model of competency is being developed (which the participants of these seminars will be involved in) that can be used as an audit model to evaluate your staff competencies; a letter has been sent to the Commission referring to the urgent short-term need to provide facilities for the accession countries in Brussels. In response to this latter point a resource centre has been set up by ETUC for the trade unions and by UNICE for the three employers' organisations (UNICE, CEEP, UEAPME).

Following this general discussion, each of the national participants was asked to select three issues from the above "long-list" that they wished to spend the following day working on. This more focused "tour de table" produced consensus on five broad areas;

Developing quality mandates	Building quality processes for developing appropriate mandates and ensuring implementation of agreements reached in a manner that allows tight deadlines to be respected.
Quality representation	The objective should be to ensure those who go to negotiations do justice to the people they represent. Development of strong arguments and appropriate selection of representatives will be crucial factors. This means working

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	to improve human skills, making best use of networking skills, providing training, assuring full understanding of the rules of the European game and devoting adequate financial resources.
Working together	Listening to each other, offering mutual respect, communicating shared understanding, identifying win/win solutions and developing means to communicate so we understand one another better.
Information flows and consultation	We need to know what is going on at EU level. We need better information flows between ourselves and sister organisations, between trade unions and employers' organisations and better upward and downward flows between us and members
Representivity	Although there are trade unions in Slovenia who are represented at the EU level, European Directives affect everyone. Likewise there are micro and state employers that do not belong to employers' organisations.

Overnight the broad areas were converted into specific task descriptions and translated for the working groups.

DAY TWO (25th January)

Session six (Working groups)

Action plan development

Three working groups; again one trade union group, one employers' group and one joint group, were given two and a half hours to develop responses to the following questions;

Trade Union and Employers' Organisation Groups

Develop a specific action plan to address each of the following issues;

- 1. What do we need to do to develop quality processes for our organisations' mandate and to implement European level Agreements? Consider how information flows at all levels can be improved.*
- 2. How can we insure quality representation at the European level? Consider in particular how we can make best use of the financial and human resources available to us.*
- 3. How can our organisations maximise their representation of employers and employees in Slovenia?*

Joint Group

- 1. How can Employers' Organisations and Trade Unions adopt processes and practices together to improve their effectiveness at the European level and their implementation of EU level Agreements?*

For each group, a working group chairperson/rapporteur was appointed and the experts were divided amongst the groups in a similar manner to session three above.

Session seven (Working group feedback)

Action plan development

The group rapporteurs presented the following feedback from their working sessions ;

Trade Union Group

Improving processes, including information flows:

- ❖ The ETUC resource center will be used in order to get relevant, new information as quickly as possible.
- ❖ Information will be disseminated in a timely fashion and through multiple means (including e-mail).
- ❖ Frequent discussions need to be held at central office on European issues.
- ❖ The news bulletin "Work Unity" will dedicate a special section to European level social dialogue issues.

Making the best use of the financial and human resources and ensuring quality representation:

- ❖ One person will be given the responsibility for finding resources from the various sources of funding available.
- ❖ Relevant information in connection with this would be widely disseminated by e-mail.

Maximising representation of employees in Slovenia:

- ❖ A proposal will be made to form an informal group of Trade Union officials and to articulate areas of common interest will be presented at the next meeting of the Slovenian Free Trade Union board.

Employers' Group

Improving processes, including information flows:

- ❖ Joint meetings will be organised to discuss how European level agreements can be implemented.
- ❖ Rules will be formulated to promote efficient and effective information flows.

Making the best use of the financial and human resources available to us.

- ❖ Information on available European funds will be provided by the employers' resource center based in UNICE.

How can your organisation maximise their representation of employers Slovenia?

- ❖ A network of Employers' Organisations and members will come together in working groups to discuss current European issues. UNICE and UEAPME will assist their respective members in identifying the dates of important EU meetings and key issues on which to concentrate preparatory work at national level.

Joint Group

How can the social partners adopt processes and practices together to improve their effectiveness at the European level and their implementation of EU level Agreements?

It was noted that any improvements to Slovenian social dialogue should build upon existing systems and achievements.

- ❖ Social dialogue methods in other countries will be reviewed and benchmarked with a view to improving Slovenian practices.
- ❖ In order to further promote trust and respect a common action plan will be developed through regular meetings between the Slovenian social partners. There will be an initial focus to publish joint positions on non-contentious issues.

Session eight (Consensus building session)

Action plan development

During the discussion of the working group reports in plenary session, it was agreed that action plans could be developed for the priority issues.

It was agreed that the formal action plan emerging from the seminar should be both focused and achievable. It was noted that many of the ideas contained in the working materials above are worthy of follow-up and should not be lost.

There was agreement of all parties to the following actions;

<i>Trade unions</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduce in the newspaper Work Unity, a specific section dealing with social dialogue at the European level;2. Ensure regular discussion of European issues in the most senior trade union policy-making bodies;3. Nominate a specific individual to find sources of European funding that could be accessed by the Slovakian trade unions;4. Make maximum use of the new ETUC resource centre in the wide circulation of relevant information on European issues;5. Propose the establishment of an informal group of Slovenian trade union officials to identify and discuss their common interests in Europe at the next meeting of the board of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

<i>Employers' organisations</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. AES will establish working groups comprising a network of employers' organisations and members to construct joint employer opinions on European issues. UNICE and UEAPME will assist their respective members in identifying the dates of important EU meetings and key issues on which to concentrate preparatory work at national level.2. Establish joint employer meetings to discuss the implementation of European

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level agreements;

3. Based on information provided by the joint European employers' resource centre maximise Slovenian access to European funding;
4. Rules will be formulated for the improvement of information flows between and within national employers' organisations on European issues.

Joint action by national social partners

1. Improvements in bipartite Slovenian social dialogue should build upon existing forms of joint discussion e.g. the economic and social council;
2. Jointly benchmark and review social dialogue models from other member states in order to further improve Slovenian practice;
3. In order to further improve mutual trust and respect between the social partners, they will develop an action plan, with regular meetings and conferences, to discuss European issues, review progress, and maximise areas of agreement on non-contentious issues such as lifelong learning.

The meeting ended with the general agreement that a lot had been accomplished in a very short period of time. Not only had a soundly thought through series of actions been agreed upon, but the meeting itself had helped cement positive relationships between the national social partners in a very constructive way. Thanks were offered to all those involved in the preparation and conduct of the seminar.

List of Appendices

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|--------------|---|
| Appendix one | Seminar agenda |
| Appendix two | Agreed action plan from the Slovenian seminar |

AGENDA

Joint Project of the European Social Partner Organisations:
 "CEEC social partners' participation in the European social dialogue:
What are Social Partners' Needs?"

National Seminar No. 6

Venue: Hotel Kokra, Predoslje, Slovenia

Date: 24 and 25 January 2005

DAY ONE

Monday 24th January

0900 - 0930	Registration		
0930 - 1000	Introductions and welcome	Plenary	
1000 - 1045	"Explaining the European Social Dialogue"	Plenary	Mr. Alan Wild
1045 - 1100	Coffee break		
1100 - 1300	Three concurrent work groups; Group 1 "What do we need to do to build successful social dialogue partner organisations at the national level that are capable of contributing effectively to the European social dialogue?" – trade union group. Group 2 "What do we need to do to build successful social dialogue partner organisations at the national level that are capable of contributing effectively to the European social dialogue?" – employer group Group 3 "What are the actions and behaviours that will make our meetings together as successful a possible?" - joint trade union and employer group.	Work Groups	
1300 - 1400	Lunch break		
1400 - 1500	Feedback from Groups 1,2 and 3	Plenary	
1500 - 1515	Coffee break		
1515 - 1600	Presentation of research; "Successful social partners and successful meetings – learning from experience"	Plenary	Mr. Alan Wild
1600 - 1800	General discussion and agreement on the characteristics, actions and behaviours that contribute to our successful	Plenary	

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	engagement in social partnership		
1800	Close and any announcements	Plenary	
	Evening Program in accordance with announcements		

DAY TWO

Tuesday 25th January

0900 – 0915	Review of day one	Plenary	
0915 – 1200 Coffee to be taken at 1030	<p>Three concurrent work groups;</p> <p>Group 4 "Based upon yesterday's conclusions – what are the issues we need to work on to make our organisations as effective as possible in the European level Social Dialogue? What specific actions do we need to take?" – trade union group</p> <p>Group 5 "Based upon yesterday's conclusions – what are the issues we need to work on to make our organisations as effective as possible in the European level Social Dialogue? What specific actions do we need to take?" – employer group</p> <p>Group 6 "Based upon yesterday's conclusions - what are the issues we need to work on to make our involvement in the European Social Dialogue a success? What specific actions do we need to take?" - joint trade union and employer group.</p>	Work Groups	
1200 - 1300	Feedback from groups 4,5 and 6 and discussion of action plans	Plenary	
1300 - 1400	Lunch		
1400 – 1530 Coffee to be taken at 1500	Discussion and agreement on the key issues and the specific actions to be taken by the trade unions and employers individually and jointly.	Plenary	
1530 - 1600	Closing remarks	Plenary	

<i>Trade unions</i>	<i>Employers' organisations</i>	<i>Joint action by national social partners</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce in the newspaper <i>Work Unity</i>, a specific section dealing with social dialogue at the European level; 2. Ensure regular discussion of European issues in the most senior trade union policy-making bodies; 3. Nominate a specific individual to find sources of European funding that could be accessed by the Slovakian trade unions; 4. Make maximum use of the new ETUC resource centre in the wide circulation of relevant information on European issues; 5. Propose the establishment of an informal group of Slovenian trade union officials to identify and discuss their common interests in Europe at the next meeting of the board of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AES will establish working groups comprising a network of employers' organisations and members to construct joint employer opinions on European issues. UNICE and UEAPME will assist their respective members in identifying the dates of important EU meetings and key issues on which to concentrate preparatory work at national level; 2. Establish joint employer meetings to discuss the implementation of European level agreements; 3. Based on information provided by the joint European employer resource centre maximise Slovenian access to European funding; 4. Rules will be formulated for the improvement of information flows between and within national employers' organisations on European issues. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improvements in Slovenian social dialogue should build upon existing forms of joint discussion e.g. the economic and social council; 2. Jointly benchmark and review social dialogue models from other member states in order to further improve Slovenian practice; 3. In order to further improve mutual trust and respect between the social partners will develop an action plan, including regular meetings and conferences, to discuss European issues and to review progress. In particular, maximise and publish areas of agreement on non-contentious issues e.g. lifelong learning.