

CEEMET and the EMF put their social dialogue on a new footing:

14 January 2010 – Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee set up for the metal, engineering and technology-based industries

CEEMET, the Council of European Employers of the Metal, Engineering and Technology-based Industries (MET) and the EMF, the European Metalworkers' Federation, have today launched their Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for the MET industries with the formal recognition of the European Commission.

The creation of a sectoral social dialogue committee covering the entire metal, engineering and technology-based industries follows a period of ten years of fruitful discussions between CEEMET and the EMF held in a spirit of trust, consensus and good faith.

EMF is the umbrella organisation representing 75 metalworkers' unions from 34 countries with a combined total of 5.5 million affiliates. EMF acts on behalf of representative metalworkers' unions from all the Member States of the European Union as well as from European countries like Norway and Switzerland, which have not yet joined the EU and also represents metalworkers' unions from the candidate countries.

CEEMET represents the interests of employers' organisations in the metal, engineering and technology-based industries from 22 countries with a particular focus on social policy issues. CEEMET's member organisations currently represent approximately 200,000 companies, employing some 12.7 million people.

The companies in the metal, engineering and technology-based industries make up the largest industrial sector in Europe both in terms of employment levels and added value. In the wealth they generate, the people they employ and the skills they provide, these companies are vital in driving forward Europe's future economic prosperity as the European economy will continue to revolve around manufactured products and their related processes and services, creating wealth for other sectors and for our society.

Strengthening the industrial base in Europe is a key objective for both CEEMET and the EMF. The inauguration of this sectoral social dialogue committee will mark the start of an intensified cooperation between our organisations. It comes at a time when the manufacturing industries in Europe are having to cope with tremendous challenges, such as globalisation and international competition, demographic change and environmental concerns, as well as with the impact of the current economic and financial crisis. Therefore, it is vital for companies and their employees to be equipped to meet these challenges.

Creating and maintaining an environment that ensures a thriving and competitive manufacturing sector able to deliver high quality and sustainable employment should therefore be a common goal for all stakeholders in Europe.

CEEMET and the EMF want to contribute, particularly in the area of social policy, to improving the environment that supports the development of competitive and profitable companies. Without such companies, it will not be possible to have sustainable jobs and improve the social conditions in the metal, electrical and technology-based industries in Europe. By creating an improved economic environment, CEEMET and the EMF are convinced that the industries in our sector and their employees have a future in Europe.

This Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee will also help to increase mutual understanding between the members of CEEMET and the EMF by endeavouring, on the basis of an exchange of national practices, to reach a common view on the situation in the metal, engineering and technology-based industries, the challenges that they face, as well as the tools, and how they can be managed, for implementing changes in these industries.

CEEMET and the EMF both acknowledge that the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are essential features for the activities of their Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee. They also fully recognize that European social dialogue is a bilateral, autonomous and voluntary process that must take into account the diversity of national industrial relations and legal systems.

The EMF and CEEMET have identified the following subjects as possible topics for future discussions within their Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee:

1. international competitiveness
2. anticipating skills requirements
3. managing an ageing workforce
4. worker mobility
5. research & development and innovation

A two year work programme has been adopted today and will serve as a guideline for CEEMET and the EMF in their future discussions and activities.

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