

02.06.2015

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

(06/2015)

Subject: Summary of the EMPL delegation to Denmark 17-18 March 2015

Summary report

A delegation of the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee, headed by the 2nd Vice-Chair Ms. Danuta JAZLOWIECKA (EPP) and composed of Members Jan KELLER (S&D), Brando BENIFEI (S&D) and Martina DLABAJOVÁ (ALDE) as well as 3rd Vice-Chair Ulla TØRNÆS (ALDE) and Rina Ronja KARI (GUE/NGL) as local Members, visited Copenhagen and Slagelse on 17-18 March 2015.

The purpose of the delegation was to learn about measures put in place to tackle youth unemployment and to address the skills mismatch. The meetings took place according to the attached program of the visit.

17 March 2015

Meeting with Members of Employment Committee and the European Affairs Committee at the Folketinget

The delegation met with Chairwoman Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil (Social Democratic Party), Vice-Chairman Bent Bøgsted (Danish People's Party), Mr. Jan Johansen (Social democratic Party) and Mr. Jens Ejner Christensen (Liberal Party).

Chairwoman Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil gave a presentation of the legislation recently adopted by the DK parliament covering a broad number of issues including raising the retirement age, early retirement reform, cash benefits reform and reform of the sick leave compensation

scheme. She underlined that the major objectives of the reforms have been to (a) protect workers from the consequences of the economic crisis, (b) to improve the competitiveness of the Danish labour market and (c) to increase the number of people actively participating in the labour force. She then focused her presentation on the state of play of youth unemployment in Denmark and the measures available to help young people to obtain education through early intervention and activation measures (unemployment benefits, cash benefits, education benefit, and state educational grant and loan schemes).

The discussion between the EMPL delegation and the Danish MPs focused on systems for monitoring, the cooperation between employers and job centres, the use of cash benefits and the VET system. MEPs also asked how the employers were encouraged to offer traineeships and continuing education, and how technical skills were promoted among young people. The quality of the social dialogue and the active role of social partners were praised. Finally Members discussed the concept of "Houses of entrepreneurs", the flexicurity model and the different reforms of this model that took place in recent years.

Presentation of Nestlé Youth Employment Initiative & Alliance for Youth

The delegation met with representatives of Nestlé who gave a presentation of their Youth Employment Initiative and Alliance for Youth. Nestlé committed to hire 10 000 young people aged below 30 and to offer 10 000 apprenticeships and traineeship positions by 2016. Nestlé is a founding member of the Alliance4YOUth, a pan-European Initiative with notably Nestlé's suppliers, competitors and other private sector actors. It also created a programme throughout Europe providing career counselling at schools and "Readiness for work" workshops. In 2014 they hired 7690 young people across Europe, offered 4142 apprenticeship and traineeship positions, opened new apprenticeship schemes in Slovenia, Italy, Spain and Portugal, and organised 1677 "Readiness for work" workshops with 5652 volunteering Nestlé employees. Nestlé also offers a programme promoting labour mobility, offering practical and vocational training for Spanish students in the Nescafé Dolce Gusto factory in Schwerin (Germany). The programme runs in partnership with the local government of Catalonia, the Employment Office and the Chamber of Commerce as well as EURES.

After the presentation, the delegation had the opportunity to listen to two young women who spoke about their personal experience as employee and trainee respectively. The first "witness" spoke particularly about her experience before she obtained a job at Nestlé and how being unemployed right after university can influence one's identity in society.

Round table with Representatives of Youth Organisations

The delegation met with Yasmin Davalli and Laura Kofod (National Union of Students), Peter Christensen and Anders Stendevad (National Organisation for VET students), Steffen Krogsgaard Andersen (National Federation of Business Students), Kasper Sand Kjaer (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions - Youth Organisation), Lisbeth Zornig Andersen and Emma Schmidt (Huset Zornig).

The discussion with this broad range of youth representatives focussed on the hurdles young people face in finding their way on the labour market. Both VET and university students voiced their concerns about getting internships which often are obligatory in order to graduate. They also highlighted the different ways in which their organisations try to help the students which they represent in preparing them for a successful entry on the labour market. Ms Lisbeth Zornig Andersen, founder and manager of Huset Zornig, an NGO aimed at helping people with serious social issues, together with Ms Emma Schmidt, gave an account of the grave difficulties that young people from dysfunctional families face when trying to assume adult, working lives.

Meeting at Ministry of Employment

The meeting was split into two parts: a presentation of the Danish VET system given by a senior adviser from the Ministry of Education, and a meeting with Minister Henrik Dam Kristensen with a presentation on flexicurity and the crisis.

Jan Reitz Jorgensen, Senior Adviser of the Ministry of Education gave a presentation providing an overview of the key features of the Danish vocational education training system and of its reform. He highlighted the shared responsibility between the State and the social partners for the development and provision of the programmes, the legal framework and governance including the quality of the programmes, and the financing of the training. The tripartite cooperation has proved to be rather successful, even though shortcomings have been identified, which hopefully have been corrected by the reform. The reform focused on four goals: (1) rendering the VET programmes more attractive to young people, (2) limiting drop-outs, (3) improving the quality of the skills acquired and (4) strengthening the trust and wellbeing in VET colleges.

The Delegation then met with Minister Henrik Dam Christensen, and heard a presentation on flexicurity and the effects of the crisis. The discussion revolved around active labour market policies (with an emphasis on education and an individualised approach to activation), the reforms and adjustments made to unemployment benefits, the PES network, social security benefits (notably the reduction of benefits for people under 30) and the disability pension system.

Visit to Copenhagen University (UCPH)

The delegation met with Anni Soborg, Vice Provost for Education and heard two presentations: the first on graduate unemployment given by Mie Dalsgaard Pihl (AE.dk) and the second on the University's strategy and activities to strengthen the employability of its graduates by Grete Bertelsen, Associate Dean of the University of Science.

Mie Dalsgaard Pihl showed research based on (anonymous) panel data that actually tracks all graduates. Her data showed that before (2008 - 10 percent) and after the crisis (2013 - 23 per cent) students with a master programme suffered the highest unemployment rates but with great differences between the different curricula. For students with vocational education, unemployment before the crisis was very low (2008 - 2.5 per cent) whereas this rate peaked at 12.5 percent in 2012 and then started to fall. Her research furthermore indicated that an unemployment spell of six months or more has a significant long lasting effect on personal income and the chance of becoming unemployed again ("unemployment scarring").

The presentation by Ms Grete Bertelsen about the University's strategy and activities to strengthen the employability of its graduates, showed a very pro-active approach by the UCPH including one-week summer courses for graduates titled "Create your career", a strong emphasis on university-to-business collaboration (with students being promoted to write their thesis within real life company contexts) and on self-employment, and strong links between university and employers to keep students' curricula closely aligned with the needs on the labour market.

Working Dinner with Social Partners

The social partners LO (the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions) and DA (the Confederation of Danish Employers) invited the delegation for a working dinner. Ms Marie Louise Knüppert, Confederal Secretary of LO, and Mr Jørn Neergaard Larsen, Director of DA emphasised the

very close cooperation of social partners in Denmark, stressing they were in direct contact virtually every day.

The competences of social partners in Denmark are far-reaching with them having quasi-legislative powers in the field of employment and labour market regulation.

The social partners emphasised that the Flexicurity model - which combines security for workers with flexibility for employers - is unchallenged in Denmark and has fared relatively well during the crisis.

The social partners showed deep concern about the differences in resilience that EU economies have shown during the crisis and told the delegation that, at EU level, conferring with their EU counterparts, they were very active in looking what EU social partners could do to help to overcome the crisis - while respecting social partner autonomy.

18 March 2015

Visit to Business Academy ZIBAT

The delegation visited the Zealand Institute of Business and technology (ZIBAT) and heard a presentation on the Danish higher education system, the different programmes offered at ZIBAT, including its cooperation with the private sector, and the Regional Labour Market Council. The discussion focused on the forecasts that are made about the skills needs on the (regional) labour market and the internships that are included in the curriculum. All students must have an internship as part of their education, some are paid for by companies (eg students in chemical and biotechnical science spend one year as trainee in the private sector), others are paid for by the State (eg students in the construction technology programme, who have to have a 4 month internship). Several Members also addressed the issue of mobility, within Denmark and within the EU. The school representatives indicated that labour mobility was mostly confined to regional mobility.

Visit to the Municipality of Slagelse

The delegation visited the job centre of Slagelse. A striking feature was the homely character of the centre with the office area close to being a 'living room'. Staff of the job centre informed the delegation that job seekers are profiled in categories depending on how much distance they have to the labour market. For each category a tailor-made programme is used that can include education if people are relatively close to the labour market but need additional skills. People far removed from the labour market first have to follow a programme to get them ready for the 'world of work'. Staff furthermore indicated that the job centre is in close and constant contact with local and regional education and labour market authorities so as to identify skills needs and labour market opportunities. Also the centre tries to be very pro-active in picking up new trends with one new development being that among many young job seekers - notwithstanding their many Facebook contacts - loneliness more and more emerged as a major problem.

Visit to Musholm Holidays, Sport and Conference

The delegation heard a presentation about the Musholm Holidays, Sport and Conference Centre. The Centre is funded partially by the Danish Labour Market Holiday Fund and the Muscular

Dystrophy Foundation. The purpose of Musholm is to offer attractive holiday and leisure facilities to people with disabilities, with the objectives of self-development and empowerment. Employees are primarily hired on the basis of their qualifications and skills, and are not necessarily persons with special needs or disabilities. But due to the extraordinary high degree of accessibility and 'décor' of the workplace, Musholmbugt does not have the typical physical limitations for recruiting persons with a disability as forthcoming staff or employees.

The delegation was then given a tour of the premises, both the existing facilities (rental units with special equipment for people with disabilities) and the site under construction, focusing on the future sports and leisure centre.

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PROGRAMME

DELEGATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO DENMARK

Tuesday, 17 March 2015 – Copenhagen	
08.30 – 09.00h	Departure from hotel – walk to Parliament (1.0 km)
09.00 – 10.30h	<p>Visit to DK Parliament “Folketinget”</p> <p><i>Address: Christiansborg, 1240 Copenhagen</i></p> <p>Meeting with Members of DK Employment Committee and DK European Affairs Committee</p>
10.30 – 11.00h	Departure from Parliament – walk to EP Info Office (1.1 km)
11.00 – 13.00h	<p>Nestlé Youth Initiative + Round Table with DK Youth Representatives</p> <p><i>Address: "Restaurant Bdr. Price", Rosenborggade 15-17, 1130 Copenhagen</i></p> <p>11.00 – 11.30h: Presentation of Nestlé Youth Employment Initiative</p> <p>11.30 – 13.00h: Round Table with Representatives of DK Youth Organisations (in the presence of local journalists)</p> <p><i>During the Round Table <u>Lunch</u> will be served</i></p>
13.00-13.30h	Departure from EP Info Office – walk to the Ministry of Employment (1.1 km)
13.30 – 15.00h	<p>Visit to the Ministry of Employment</p> <p><i>Address: Ved Stranden 8, 1061 Copenhagen</i></p> <p>13.30 – 14.00h: Staff Presentation DK Policies tackling youth unemployment and addressing the skills mismatch</p> <p>14.00 – 15.00h: Meeting with Minister Henrik Dam Kristensen</p>
15.00 – 15.30h	Departure from Ministry of Employment – walk to Copenhagen University (0.8 km)
15.30 – 17.00h	<p>Visit to Copenhagen University</p> <p><i>Address: Nørregade 10, 1165 Copenhagen</i></p> <p>Presentations and Q&A on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic perspective on DK Policies tackling youth unemployment

	<p>and addressing the skills mismatch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University policies aimed at matching students' skills with the requirements of the labour market
17.00 – 17.15h	Departure from Copenhagen University – return to the hotel (0.6 km)
17.15 – 18.45h	Time off
18.45 – 19.00h	Departure from the hotel – walk to venue meeting with social partners (0.5 km)
19.00h –	<p>Meeting with Social Partners DA and LO - working dinner <i>Address: Vester Voldgade 113, 1790 Copenhagen</i></p> <p>Discussion on how the social partners are participating in tackling (youth) unemployment and the skills mismatch, including by the social partners' use of internships, vocational training etc. Additionally discussion on “The Danish model”.</p>

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United in Diversity

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