



ИНФОРМИРАНИ И ОПИТНИ
ЗА УСТОЙЧИВО ЗЕМЕДЕЛИЕ

Инфомирани и искусни за одржливо земјоделство

***INFORMED AND EXPERIENCED FOR SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE - ENHANCING THE INFORMATION AND
CONSULTATION CAPACITY OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS IN
SECTOR OF AGRICULTURE FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN
WORKING LIFE FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE >***

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: 5 November 2012

Meeting Location: Skopje, Macedonia

Recorded By: Marija Nikolovska

Ljubomir Mitev

Agro Sindikat

1 ATTENDANCE

Name	Title	Organization
VALENTINA VASILYONOVA	Vice President / Project coordinator	FNSZ - Bulgaria
SALVATORE SPARACIO		ALPA - Italy
SVETLA VASILEVA	President	FNSZ - Bulgaria
JEAN PIERRE KLAPUCH		Réseau Projectives
KIRE STOJANOVSKI	President of TU	Pelagonija/AGRO Sindikat
SASHA ATANASOVSKA	Board Member of TU	Sokotab/AGRO Sindikat
VELE KAREVSKI	President of TU	Sokotab/AGRO Sindikat
SLOBODAN DZONIK	Regional Representative Gevgelija	AGRO Sindikat
GJORGJI MACHUKOVALIEV	President of TU	Stocharstvo/AGRO Sindikat
ZHIVKO NAUMOVSKI	President of TU	Swisslion Agroplod/AGRO Sindikat
MIRJANA STEFANOVSKA	Board Member of TU	Swisslion Agroplod/AGRO Sindikat
VALENTINA MIHAJLOVSKA	Board Member of TU	Buchen Kozjak/AGRO Sindikat
MAJA TRAJANOVSKA	Board Member of TU	Buchen Kozjak/AGRO Sindikat
ORDANCHE ANGELOV	President of TU	Povadarie/AGRO Sindikat
SPASKO AKIMOV	Board Member of TU	Povadarie/AGRO Sindikat
RUZHDI AMZOVSKI	Board Member of TU	Swisslion Agroplod/AGRO Sindikat
ACO KIRJAS	President of TU	Strezhevvo/AGRO Sindikat
ANA JORDEVA	President of TU	Zletovica/AGRO Sindikat
ANGEL DIMITROV	President	Employers' Organization Macedonia
BELINDA NIKOLOVSKA	General Secretary	Employers' Organization Macedonia
SVETLANA RISTOVSKA ANTIKJ	Coordinator	Employers' Organization Macedonia
ZLATE POPOVSKI		Employers' Organization Macedonia
KOCHO BOSHOVSKI	President of TU	Zhito Luks/AGRO Sindikat
ZHIVKO DANEVSKI	President	AGRO Sindikat
RADA BEZHOVSKA	General Secretary	AGRO Sindikat
LJUBOMIR MITEV	Legal Services	AGRO Sindikat
MARIJA NIKOLOVSKA	Technical Secretary	AGRO Sindikat

2 MEETING LOCATION

Building: Hotel Continental, Skopje
Conference Room: Continental Club

3 MEETING START

Meeting Schedule Start: 09:00

Meeting Actual Start: 09:00

4 AGENDA

09.00 – 09.30

- Welcoming of participants and experts

The meeting started by welcoming of participants and experts by the host, Zhivko Danevski, President of Agro Sindikat Macedonia, which was followed by introductions of the participants and the experts.

09.30 – 10.15

– Valentina Vasilyonova, Project coordinator, Vice President of FNSZ Bulgaria

- Introduction to the project and the aim of the workshop

Valentina Vasilyonova, coordinator of the project and Vice President of FNSZ gave the introduction to the project and the aims of the workshop. She stated the meaning of informing and consulting employees, that the capacities for the system of information and consultation (I&C) should be enhanced, regarding the implementation in the national legislatures. In her opinion, this subject is not well known or used in our common sector, the sector of agriculture, which rises the need of uniting the forces of the countries in the sector, like it is the case of this project, partners being the trade unions in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania, hoping that from this joint project will benefit both Social Partners (the unions and the employers from the 3 above mentioned countries)/ their bipartite social dialog regarding the issues of I&C and in general. One of the most important points of this project is to collect the experiences and good practices of the old EU countries from the experts we have invited in the 3 partner countries, in order to promote employee involvement and jointly to come up with innovative solutions for the participation of employees. As a result, the working conditions of the employees and workers in the agricultural sector should be improved. This project will help educate a lot of individuals in order to promote activities and mechanisms for I&C and participation of the employees in agriculture.

10.15 – 10.35

- Jean-Pierre Klapuch, Réseau Projectives

- Questionnaire on information and consultation awareness at undertaking level in Macedonian agriculture sector

Jean-Pierre Klapuch from Réseau Projectives explained the purpose of the questionnaires on information and consultation awareness at undertaking level. For better understanding, he stated that the directive for I&C is not just a directive but a revolution in its own in the social sphere, because it gives possibilities for larger involvement of the employees in the decision making processes. He stated that on the level of EU, all the processes would be ineffective if the information is being transferred too late to the national level. What this project should aim is making a suitable system which will allow the I&C to be available in all working environments. He stated that the content of these questionnaires that the participants will fill will be analyzed in order to obtain the real picture of the state of I&C in the agricultural sector in Macedonia.

10.35 – 11.20

– Zhivko Danevski, President of Agro Sindikat

- European Directive 2002/14/EC – Introduction - how it is transposed into Macedonian legislation:

- Macedonian Labour Relations Law - its effects and efficiency

- Overview of the Macedonian social dialogue in agriculture

Zhivko Danevski stated the level of implementation of the Directive on I&C in the Macedonian Legislation, sharing with the participants his concerns about this issue not being put on a higher level. He gave a short presentation of the activities of the Agro Sindikat, especially in the agricultural sector, with an underline on the seasonal workers, being the most vulnerable category. He said that the employers in Macedonia think that employees should not be informed and consulted. The workers are usually informed about company processes when they are already finished, with no option for consultation or their involvement. They are mute observers of the situation of their companies. We don't have a Workers' Councils, even though we have a Law about Worker's Councils, but it will be put in force when we enter the EU. We, as a trade union are conducting continues education on our membership on several subjects, and we will include the I&C in our future trainings. Regarding the Social Dialog in Macedonia, beside the Labour Relations Law, we have a General Collective Agreement for the private sector and a Branch Collective Agreement for the workers in the agriculture and foodstuff industry, and also for the other branches we cover. He stated that Agro Sindikat constantly fights for preserving the working places of its members, despite the high level of unemployment in our county, especially in the agricultural sector. Zhivko Danevski gave a proposal - to implement the part of the Directive for the election of representatives in the Enterprise, in the collective agreements at all levels, and preferably in the Labor Code. The role of this representative for I&C, besides the one stated in the directive, should be enriched upon the specific local needs and with the similar protection status and mandate as the union representative.

11.20 – 11.50 - Coffee break

11.50 – 12.20 - Analyzing the current situation of Information and Consultation in agriculture

- The participants were discussing how familiar are they with the process of information and consultation in the agricultural sector in Macedonia in general and also on the level of their company. Most of the discussants, especially the ones coming from smaller companies, stated that the level of informing in their companies is low. They stated that they don't have a specific person elected for informing and consulting, and this task is done by the trade union's representative, and the informing is mostly upon the Union's request.

One of the discussants said that in his opinion I&C is a revolution, especially in the agricultural sector. The role of the union is in the education of the employees, but in cooperation with the competent ministries. It takes strategic planning and cross-sectoral analysis of the agricultural sector. The union should have its own strategy for I&C and there must be a systematic approach to specify all the questions about ithe

implementation of the Directive in the Collective agreements and in the legislation at the national level.

**12.20 – 13.10 - Salvatore Sparacio, ALPA Italy - Short overview of the Italian bipartite Social Dialogue in agriculture - Information and consultation in Italy:
- historical and strategic aspects, sharing their experience, good practices.**

The system of collective bargaining in the agricultural sector in Italy began around 1960, with a social contract between the farmers and the employers. In Italy, the law does not regulate the collective bargaining, it is regulated with mutual territorial agreements for the development of agriculture by sectors. The European Directive 2002/14/EC is implemented in 2007, but this directive has a marginal role in the collective agreements. There is no limit in respect of contracts made at territorial level. This Directive cannot be applied in the agricultural sector in Italy, since the implementation of this Directive is only applicable in enterprises with at least 50 employees. The main weakness of the practical use of the implemented Directive in general, on national level, is that it is only formally written in the Collective agreements, without any follow up act.

Agriculture is covered by national CA, agriculture and greenhouses, signed on 01 January 2010, with a duration of 4 years, This CA stipulates all the principles of labor relations. There is a national observatory that monitors the trainings, the cost of labor, the environment, health, etc.. The national observatory divided by regions through which job market, employment of youth and training is monitored. They have educational centers called Agri form, a body for professional training with independent financial fund. They have sub-centers for professional training of farmers and employment assistance, and territorial bilateral bodies for balancing mutual conflicts, regarding employment.

**13.10 – 14.00 - Angel Dimitov, President of the Employers' Organization of Macedonia
Overview of the Macedonian bipartite Social Dialogue in agriculture and the state of the information and consultation of the workers from the employers perspective –**

Regarding the social dialogue in Macedonia, the most attention to social dialogue is given by the larger companies and companies with foreign capital. This is understandable because the larger companies on one hand have a larger number of employees and therefore have to pay more attention to relationships with employees, and foreign employers have experience in the practice of social dialogue from the country of origin. The employers of small companies do not feel the need of social dialogue, nor intend to become members of an association of employers, because collective agreements can only be given greater rights of those workers have under the Labour Law (Labor Code).

Labor Relations Act is the legal framework for the functioning of social dialogue on bipartite and tripartite level in Macedonia. The law lays down rules for the formation of organizations of employers and workers (trade unions). It provides the basis for the creation of the Economic and Social Council (ESC). In August 2010, the Government and the representative unions (SSM-Trade union for the private sector and KSS for the public

sector) and the only representative organization of Employers of Macedonia (ORM) have concluded an agreement establishing ESC.

In Dimitrov's opinion, the success of the work of the social partners is measured by the number of accepted suggestions and proposals by the social partners, accepted and adopted by consensus of the ESC, in order to improve working conditions and increase the applicability of the Labor Code. Road building and developing social dialogue is neither easy, nor can it be done overnight. Its essence requires gradually and persistently building the capacity of the social partners, but also gaining mutual trust.

ORM and the representative union (SSM) are signatories of the General Collective Agreement for the private sector, which is required for the private sector, where a lot of important issues are amended, like the degrees of complexity of the jobs, overtime payments, payment holidays, night work, and more.

Agro Sindikat and ORM have concluded and signed 2 Branch CA – for the tobacco industry, and for agriculture and food industry. In each of them we have agreed upon the minimum salary, which is higher than the minimum wage nationwide.

Regarding the Directive 2002/14/EZ as general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Union, Dimitrov stated that it has been partially implemented in Macedonian legislation. To be more precise, it has been implemented in the General Collective Agreement for the private sector and the Branch Collective Agreements, going by the title - information and consultation of workers, where the consultation is defined as the exchange of views and establishment of dialogue between the representatives of the trade union or employees and the employer whenever necessary in cases determined by law, and in particular on the economic situation, decisions that can lead to substantial changes in work organization or in contractual obligations in case of transfer of a company or parts of the company, and where the employer intends to carry out collective dismissals.

14:00 – 15:20 – Lunch

15:20 – 16:10 - Svetla Vasileva, President of FNSZ Bulgaria - Short overview of the Bulgarian bipartite Social Dialogue in agriculture - Information and consultation in Bulgaria, sharing their experience and good practices.

Svetla Vasileva indicated that in Bulgaria at branch level they have tripartite Social Dialogue. There are two representative agricultural unions that negotiate with the Ministry of Agriculture and with the employers and every 3 months they discuss current issues. Their trade union FNSZ has several CA on company and branch level. In the collective agreements, among other important labor related issues, they have incorporated the salary complexity groups. Since 1992 Bulgaria has pursued a policy of returning farmland to farmers. Bulgaria faces a deficit of qualified working force, especially in the rural economy. Regarding the European Directive 2002/14/EC, Vasileva stated that Bulgaria has incorporated it in the Labor Code in 2006. She explained to the participants how the Bulgarian Union was campaigning to get the information about the implementation to the public, with examples of how it is implemented in the old

members of EU and how it takes place in the Bulgarian legislation. In Bulgaria there are Counsels for information and consultation. She stated that the Bulgarian Law gives the right to information and consultation through the I&C representative and the trade unions, and the employees can be informed about financial conditions in the companies, about restructuring and redundancy, change of work captivity, and other issues of interest to the employees. In 2007 I&C was introduced to FNSZ members and training for their members of all firms over 50 employees were conducted and now they have representatives of the employees for I&C. All the elements concerning I&C are incorporated in the CA of FNSZ.

16:10 – 16:50 - Working in groups – The participants had the opportunity to discuss between themselves about the situation of information and consultation in agriculture in Macedonia and to give their opinion in writing about the positive and negative aspects of the implementation of the Directive for I&C and to give suggestions and recommendations about how the process of I&C between workers and employers in Macedonia can be improved.

16:50 – 17:35 - Analysis on the Questionnaire - Jean-Pierre Klapuch from Réseau Projectives explained the method of analysis of the questionnaires the participants have filled, and also upon the discussions in the workshop. He stated again that each country is different and he expects that the specific data collected from each group of participants to show the real state of the process of I&C at the workplace and attitude and behaviour in Agriculture.

17:35 – 18:00 - Conclusions of the workshops

In the end of the workshop, Valentina Vasilyonova summarized the work that has been done in the workshop, once again stating that the data collected in the 3 workshops will result in the making of a practical National Guides/Recommendations on the I&C process and employee involvement in Agriculture in the 3 partner countries and the Transnational Brochure on I&C in Agriculture. She underlined that with the completion of this workshop in Skopje, more than 60 people in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania were informed and trained about the I&C procedures, both trade union and employers' representatives.

As a good example she mentioned AGROSTAR's regional training offices, where people get informal education on the I&C processes, among other subjects.

5 MEETING END

Meeting Schedule End: 18:00

Meeting Actual End: 18:10