

## The Project

### **“Managing Changes in Europe: Information and Consultation Rights”**

VS/2006/0242 and addendum VS/2007/0158

The “Managing Changes in Europe: Information and Consultation Rights” project has been developed between July 2006 and September 2007 through a coordination work at a transnational level, realized by the Economic Social and Union Study Centre (CESOS).

After a first stage, which consisted in the materials’ collection and in the creation of a shared frame of sources and knowledge by the project partners, in their national and sectoral contexts, a second stage entailing the collection of contributions written by the partners, concerning the methodology and the contents, has followed.

In particular, the methodological aspects and the surveying tools (questionnaires, formularies, terminologies of reference), provided by the CESOS, have been confronted and validated by the partnership in the occasion of a first meeting held in Rome, at CISL, in september 2006.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis instruments at disposal have subsequently been tested by the researchers in the field-work, in the different territories, and they proved effective.

During the realization of the national and sectoral reports on the matter of employees’ rights of information and consultation, following the transposition of the EU Directive 2002/14, two different workshops on the shared analysis and elaboration took place in Florence.

These meetings proved essential for a profitable confrontation among very different systems and took place at the Cisl Study Centre in Florence at the beginning of the months of February (1-2 february 2007) and March (1-2 march 2007).

The seminar meetings, lasting two days, allowed the partners to expose, confront and validate their national and sectoral reports, addressing in particular the different ways the Directive 2002/14 on the employees’ rights of information and consultation has been transposed, because of the co-presence of different juridical, bargaining and industrial relations systems.

During the first meeting in Florence, the long path towards the construction of the instruments and the organisms of the European Social Dialogue and the adoption process of the EU Directives connected with the issues concerning the construction of economic democracy and participation, have also been analysed. In addition to the Directive 2002/14, we particularly stress the Directive on the European Works Councils and the Directive on the European Society.

An important occasion of reflection and confrontation among the partners, during the second workshop in Florence, consisted in the analysis of the different systems of collective bargaining and of trade union representation, referring also to the different choices, committed to the national level, in respect of the application thresholds of the Directive 2002/14 on the information and consultation rights.

During the second workshop in Florence, we then proceeded with an in-depth analysis of the different levels of union membership in the various national contexts represented in the project, particularly as regards the small and medium-sized enterprises and the different market sectors. As far as the big multinational groups are concerned, the methods of operation of the European Works Councils and of the possible revisions to apply to the EU Directive which instituted them.

During the meetings in Florence, we have also analyzed some good practices at business, group and territorial level, presented by the different partners, which allowed us to confront some particularly significant experiences at the level of the application of the employees' rights of information and consultation, of the implementation of the participative industrial relations and of the processes of real application of the corporate social responsibility principle.

The good practices have been described and shared through description schemes, common to all the partners, allowing to make a crossed and transversal analysis.

During the project, the specific problematic concerning the definition and the applicative realization of the "consulting employees" concept has also been discussed and argued.

We noticed, indeed, that particularly but not only in the Italian case, this expression, though officially defined at the Communitarian level, is often, in the practice, confused with the bargaining processes, cancelling in this way the specific times and methods devoted to the consultation.

The coordination and confrontation work in the classroom, realized by the CESOS, as much as the realization of several in-depth interviews with experts and trade unionists with national responsibilities, allowed to reach a deep attention by the academic and trade union world, as regards the employees' processes of information, consultation and participation.

The transposition process of the Directive 2002/14 has certainly constituted the main field of analysis of the project, but the research activity has also dealt with many other issues connected with the processes to increase the economic democracy and the shared industrial relations.

An important moment of results' dissemination consisted in the final International Conference, held in Rome the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007.

The partners presented their national and sectoral reports to a public composed by more than hundred people. In addition to this a roundtable also took place, with the important

contributions from the academic, trade union and business world at a national and European level.

The convention has been reported by several press agencies and analyzed in a on-line publication of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia.

In order to realize a long-lasting and continuously implemented project, a multilingual portal has been shared by the partners, presented during the conference of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007 and realized in the following months. The portal, concerning the employees' rights of information and consultation, contains the national and sectoral reports of the project, the text of the Directive in the languages of the project partners, the legislative texts related to the transposition processes, a collection of the good practices realized by the partners, the main interventions and contributions presented during the final conference and the connected press review.

The portal, on line at the address [www.cesos.org/information](http://www.cesos.org/information), is an instrument of continuous implementation, coordinated by the CESOS, at disposal of the project partners and not only, in order to develop an updating and discussion in progress as regards the employees' rights of information and consultation and, more generally, as regards the promotion and the realization of the economic democracy principles.

In the partnership's intentions, it is an instrument aimed at realizing a "practices' community" on the rights analyzed during the project and therefore an open system to create a shared catalogue of resources and knowledge and to activate methods of participation through the sharing of a common language as regards the employees' rights of information and consultation.