



***INWORK - A European study to identify and share the best practices of the industrial relations of Craft enterprises sectors: representation beyond administration, the possible leadership of SME***

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***



## Short description of the action

At present, debates on industrial relations and representation of craft sector are focused on administrative aspects: protection and regulation. But, assuming as point of reference the overall competitiveness and growth of the economy and the globalisation, the project aimed to investigate the contribution of SME to this growth and their impact on the industrial relations and representation on the rest of the economy considering the equality of people with respect to their work and the market conditions of their work.

Specifically, to identify the best practices, the project referred to instances whereby representatives of the SME represent both the employer and their employees, the counterpart is the government and work performed in market conditions is assumed as a value.

We used a top-down and a bottom-up approach; top-down being represented by desk research and statistic data; bottom-up approach being represented by field work in five European countries to identify representative action of craft enterprises. The project has been elaborated according to the experience of all the partners involved, therefore our method implies self-examination and internal debate within our heterogeneous partnership, involving organizations linked to industrial relations as: research centers and institutes, non-profit making organizations and trade unions in order to represent all the target groups and stakeholders and coming from 5 countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary and Italy.

In this framework, the project has identified two different target groups:

1. the workforce that is employed in SME, that is well over 50% of the total workforce;
2. specific categories of employees.

The key project activities have been: Project Management, Dissemination, Evaluation, Study about the identification and analysis of the best practice of the industrial relations of Craft enterprises sector in Europe, International conference to exchange and transfer the best practices.

Finally, the project produced: Report about kick-off meeting, Final technical and financial reports, Project web-site, Study about the identification and analysis of the best practice of the industrial relations of Craft enterprises sector in Europe, Material to advertise the international conference (leaflets, brochures, folders and invitations), Press Releases, Report of the international conference to exchange and transfer the best practices, Dissemination plan, Evaluation report.

## Main objectives of the action

The project aimed to improve expertise in industrial relations and to promote the exchange of information among parties actively involved in industrial relations. In particular, the project aimed to realize a study at two different levels: 1. Top-down: to understand the impact of Craft enterprises in the economy. 2. Bottom-up: to identify the best practices of leadership in the representation of craftsmen. It also investigated if the economic reality of employers and employees are getting closer to each other than they are to the rest of the economic actors at a



representation level. To identify the best practices, the partners investigated if there are instances of representation in the Craft enterprises showing a positive perception and political influence beyond the interests of the individual category and glimpses of work ethic, social responsibility, accountability of work, quality of work, wellbeing at work and skills.

Then, an international conference has been organized in Alessandria (IT) to present the results of the project.

## Key results

After 12 months of activities, the achieved results are:

1. Identification, collection and analysis, in a systematic way, of the available best practices of the industrial relations of craft enterprises in Europe to compare the different situations in the participating countries.
2. Exploitation of the identified best practices to raise the knowledge about the impact of SME in EU economy and the leadership in the representation of workers of the craft enterprises.
3. Organisation of an International Conference in Alessandria (Italy) to present the study results and to share experiences and best practices and involve counterparts, stakeholders and other EU countries.

According to the INWORK study the most important results can be explained in three points. First, the so laws regulating "craft sector" are present in all the European countries with some differences, with very significant number of enterprises and activities. Secondly, representation would be strengthened if the craftsmen and micro-entrepreneurs became aware that the value of being to subject competition can be the main factor for their representation vis-à-vis the rest of society.

Thirdly - Trade unions should manage to conform to the very different associations or organizations of the craft sector. The project also provided good opportunities for sharing information and best practices and this helped representation in the craft enterprises to look for best local or national solutions.

INWORK project calls for the strengthening of the presence of the stakeholders who represent the craft enterprises in the social dialogue at national and European level, given the importance of the craft enterprises in the national economies. It also calls for the adoption at national and European level of an approach, where the craft employers and the employees of micro enterprises are considering themselves to be collaborators rather than competitors, abstaining from the traditional approach where employers and employees are considered to have clashing interests, regardless of their specific situation.

The added value is inherent in the objectives that led us to present the project and that is to know and analyze common areas of work and action that could initiate a serious debate and an



exchange of experiences and best practices on the subject of social dialogue for professional unions of craft sector.

The long-term impacts of the action can be summarized in a few points:

- a) In dealing with a problem related to the categories of craft workers.
- b) Contacts and relationships between the different project partners in a share logic of problems encountered but also of solutions implemented.
- c) Implementation of real "synergistic actions over the territory" in the presence of specific or common problems that involve the same stakeholders.
- d) Exchange of good practices enabled as a multiplier of the results achieved in the participating countries through the use of the project website and the international conference.

Thanks to the dissemination activities, the project partners will be able to transfer the project results to the identified stakeholders and to a wider audience; sharing the know-how of the most experienced partners and creating a multiplier effect of the evidence base methods. Finally, thanks to the publication of the study, other actors will be aware of the project. In other words, starting from the information collected in the study, other associations and decision making working in the project fields will be able to apply the project methodology an results also in other contexts. Therefore, the multiplier effect of the project will be created naturally thanks to its activities.