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**Expected results:**

- **Exchange of information and experience between employers in the social services sector both at national and European level**
- **Increased knowledge and awareness about the social dialogue processes in 11 European Union member states**
- **Conclusions, recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders at European level and within member states**
- **Enhanced cooperation within the sector and promotion a culture of inclusive social dialogue at national and European level**
- **Dissemination of the project results through reports and newsletters and at the final conference.**

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The 9th and 10th January 2012 was the date of the kick-off meeting in Brussels launching the project *Promoting employers' social services organisations in social dialogue (PESSIS)* which will run for 9 months until September 2012. The project, funded by the European Programme *Industrial relations and Social dialogue*, is supported by a broad partnership of European<sup>1</sup> and national<sup>2</sup> organisations representing social and health services providers.

**The main aim of this initiative is to remedy to the lack of qualitative and quantitative data on labour issues in the sector from the perspective of employers and to promote a culture of social dialogue.**

Though the social services sector represents a considerable share of the EU workforce, it does not have a place in the European social dialogue. This partly depends on the lack of employers' representative structures at national level with and a recognized role in social dialogue. The situation is indeed very scattered at national level since in very few countries such as Belgium social services employers participate in collective bargaining about labour issues.

PESSIS is the first step in a longer term process which has the creation of a sectoral committee in European social dialogue representing employers and workers in the social services sector as ultimate goal. The necessary element which would make it possible is the establishment of a platform at European level representing employers in the sector with members in a significant number of member states.

**The preliminary phase of the project is a mapping exercise** aiming at collecting information on the existence, the functioning and organization of social dialogue and the involvement of the social services sector **in 11 countries** (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, UK). The National Partners, together with the Researchers in their respective country, will reach out to other employers in the sector for the collection of comprehensive data.

**The National stakeholders meetings**, which will be organized between March and April 2012, will be a crucial moment to check the data gathered by the National Researchers and to meet with all key players in the country. Starting from the subsectors well covered by the partnership, such as elderly care, long-term care, services for people with disabilities and rehabilitation, this mapping exercise aims at covering the bulk of all personal social services, including, e.g., the child care sector.

**The national reports resulting from the research done in each country** will be then compiled and validated by a Coordinating Researcher. **The final expected result is a European summary report** with a comparative analysis of the main features as well as best practices and barriers in different national contexts and recommendations.

The final conference on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 in Brussels would be the opportunity to assess the success of the project and discuss with relevant national and European stakeholders the way forward. **A final European report will be produced after the final conference** containing the most significant information and best practices which might be useful to develop a framework for employers in the social services sector.

<sup>1</sup> CEDAG, Caritas Europa, Eurodiaconia, the European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR), European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA), the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), SOLIDAR, Workability Europe and the European Federation of public services union (EPSU).

<sup>2</sup> Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Wohnungslosenhilfe (BAWO)-Austria, Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH)-UK, Cáritas Española, Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), Union des Entreprises à Profit Social (UNIPSO)-Belgium, Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband(AWO)-Germany, , Luovi Vocational College-Finland, University Rehabilitation Institute Republic of Slovenia (URI), Panagia Eleousa-Greece; Dutch Association of Healthcare Providers for People with Disabilities (VGN); As observers: Centre de la Gabrielle-France