

Customised European measures

Organisations from all over Europe regularly meet to exchange experiences, to learn from one another and to find solutions to common problems. They work on mutual understanding and social cohesion in a united Europe.

Last week, at a European seminar on the new European Social Dialogue between social partners, it once more became apparent that this is not an easy exercise. There arose, for instance, an intense debate between representatives from northern and southern European organisations on the conditions for achieving well-being at the workplace.

While here the balance between work, private life and good leadership scores highly and the wages issue is found lower on the ladder, this ranking is reversed in the South and the East of Europe. There, having a job (read: a salary) is paramount. The second place on the list goes to keeping that job the next day.

It is therefore understandable that it's so hard to introduce the same European measures everywhere at the same time.

But that's not the only spot we find the European shoe pinching. Nearer to home as well things are in danger of going wrong. Because in Flanders too European regulations are splitting the ranks, albeit not between North and South. The increasing issuing of rules by the EU slowly permeates our Flemish policies, for example the European legislation on public procurement, or the European energy policy. Sometimes it's less noticeable, but equally drastic, also in our organisations, even at our workplaces.

Let's mention the complicated General Data Protection Regulation, which every organisation has to comply to; and the enforced European laws that, without any form of prior consultation, force f.i. the arranging of group trips into a tight straitjacket. These regulations are primarily written for larger companies and organisations, that can comply by doing some shifting and rearranging of personnel and means, and can hire expensive specialised consultants.

For smaller non-profit associations, founded from the bottom up with the help of numerous volunteers, these extra administrative complications are as good as unachievable and unaffordable.

If we want to give better chances to the new vigour of citizens' initiatives here and all over Europe, we need in fact more custom-made European regulations.

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