

# NEWSLETTER SUW

## June 2007

*Impressions from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Summer University of Work, Duisburg 31-08-2006 – 02-09-2006*

*“Europe Old and new: Restructuring of Work between Enlargement, Mobility, and Demographic Change”*

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This is a Newsletter based on the events at the second Summer University of Work (SUW), organised in August/September 2006 in Duisburg. In the Newsletter we present impressions from the programme, the participants, the objectives and the results – during and after the SUW. The event was possible due to a grant from the European Commission and contributions from several German sponsors.

And of course the presence of so many practical experts in working Europe produced a result we are proud of. Thank you all for coming, contributing and disseminating.

Plans for a 3<sup>rd</sup> SUW in Poland next year have been developed the last months. We hope to welcome you and other colleagues in September 2008, given we succeed to organise the event.

The Steering Committee of the Summer University of Work

# A European Concept that Works

## ***Highlights from the second Summer University of Work (SUW)***

### ***Duisburg August 31 – September 2 2006***

**Around 300 participants from 23 countries met during three days in Duisburg to bring knowledge and experiences together on 'Work in Europe'. Researchers and practitioners, students and politicians, managers and NGO representatives, trade unionists and entrepreneurs worked with each other in various situations and settings. They experimented with new forms of international and intercultural learning on a variety of topics.**

Duisburg followed Nantes (France) where the first Summer University of Work came into being in the year 2004. Building on the Nantes experience Germany hosted the second SUW<sup>1</sup>. Here a slightly different design had been developed to make the results and follow-up more robust and relevant for the people visiting, and for their constituencies all over the European Union.

***Europe Old and New: Restructuring of Work between Enlargement, Mobility and Demographic Change*** - the Duisburg programme was ambitious and differentiated. Nearly 300 experts came to The Ruhr Gebiet in Germany and played an active part in discussions, communication panels and field trips.

It would not have been possible to offer such a manifold and attractive programme without the support of the EU, the various sponsors, the international steering committee, all contributors and the supporters in the background.

One of the central experiences in Duisburg was quite dominant among participants: common challenges and still various ways to handle them in the EU.

#### **Follow-up and longer term outcomes**

The Summer University of Work was not only a physical three days meeting at Duisburg University, in the region (field trips and cultural events).

The contacts, discussions and common activities in Duisburg should be transferred into projects, web activities and further meetings during the interval between two European summer universities.

Intercultural learning is at the base of these kinds of contacts and initiatives. By learning and working with European co-citizens and social actors, conditions for more structural forms of networking and co-developing within EU 27 can be shaped. That was one of the leading ideas behind the concept of the Summer University of Work. And the results – some of which will be touched on further in this Newsletter – show this concept can work and in principle did work.

The enthusiasm of almost 100 % of the participants, and that of the Ruhr Gebiet actors met during field trips and workshops, was unequivocal. And it illustrated and provided that 'Europe' and its social development can be shared and worked on successfully, starting from everybody's expertise.

In this Newsletter we give the first impressions and data about what happened in Duisburg, how people valued the meeting, and what kind of follow-up and new plans have been produced since.

We hope to be able to set further steps towards a 3<sup>rd</sup> Summer university of Work, scheduled for Poland September 2008.

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<sup>1</sup> In German: ESUdA (Europäische Sommer Universität der Arbeit)

## Who came to Duisburg and from where?

266 people registered as participants of the SUW in Duisburg. Among them most of the speakers and the special experts who shared their knowledge and experiences with all the others. They joined with a group of 30 University students, acting as hosts and organisers. Plus a number of (most German) experts, who received field trip groups or discussed actual themes (key note speakers and workshop presenters). And adding to diversity in communication activities, artists and a photographer brought in their view on work in Europe.

### Short profile of participants

Slightly more men than women (53 % - 47 %) came to the second SUW. Most participants were German (144). The French delegation was by far the biggest foreign group (33), which seems to show the effect of hosting an SUW two years before. Other countries with considerable delegations were UK (19), Sweden (16), Italy (11) and Poland (10). In total 19 of the EU 27 had participants. From the new member states 23 persons attended – despite the fact that only German, English and French translations could be provided.

About 13 % were active social partners, among the others a lot of people had intense relations with one or two of the social partners in their country.<sup>2</sup>

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## “A Universe of Practical European experiences”

### *Common intercultural learning in Europe - from toleration and acceptance towards comprehension*

Matthias Knuth, president of the International Steering Committee opened the Summer University on August 31 2006. He expressed the need for new forms of intercultural learning, to cope with European diversity in a productive and inspiring way. Instead of *learning from each other* the focus should be more on *learning together*. Only so Europeans can unveil the hidden meaning of institutions, traditions and narratives we normally take for granted, Knuth argued. A Summer University of Work, in his view, focusses on the original meaning of the word ‘university’: a universe of practical experiences, of academic disciplines, of cultural backgrounds, and of discourses embedded in different languages or families of languages.

“Work appears to be one of the most paradoxical phenomena of modern societies. It is one of those things that never quite seem to fit:

- Companies feel compelled to use less and less of it in order to survive in global markets.
- According to economic theory this should be fine since work is modelled as a disutility, anyway. And yet most people feel downgraded if they cannot support themselves through their own work.
- Many European countries face a lack of paid work, and they experience this as a serious threat to their social cohesion. On the other hand, fewer people than today

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<sup>2</sup> In May 2006 a preparative meeting took place in the UK, with a lot of attendants from trade unions. They discussed and exchanged training practices at the level of companies and workplaces.

were engaged in paid work in that golden post-war age which was called 'full employment'.

Nowadays, with more people working *and* more people unemployed, so much work that would be necessary to maintain our physical infrastructures as well as to sustain human well-being remains undone because of the lack of public finance.

Finally, those who are in paid work tend to have more and more of it any time of the day, any time of the week, and any time of the year. They are being told by employers and by politicians

- to work longer hours and longer careers,
- to update their knowledge and employability in their own time,
- but also to have more children and to educate them better,
- to engage in voluntary work,
- to consume more in order to keep the economy going,
- and to save more for their old age because they can no longer rely on the systems of social security.

I have the impression that most people don't quite figure how all that would go together.

### Not a school or formula

This Summer University of Work is not meant to be a 'school' where you can expect to get the formula to solve all the riddles of the subject called 'work'.

Neither is it an academic exhibition ground where new scientific paradigms will get branded or where established ones can demonstrate the size of their discipleship.

Rather, by calling our gathering a 'University', we want to invoke the original meaning of the word. Ideally, we would like to hear and see interacting a universe of practical experiences, of academic disciplines, of cultural backgrounds, and of discourses embedded in different languages or families of languages.

Some 50 years ago, in the early times of the European project, the agenda of 'European understanding' was primarily about acceptance and toleration. The issue of the day was to make another war forever impossible and to exploit the benefits of economic co-operation. Nowadays, these achievements are

largely taken for granted. In the Euro-Zone countries, we are experiencing that a

common currency is a very practical thing to have but not much more. It makes us understand prices more easily but it does not help us to better understand anything else.

### European diversity: strength or weakness?

If European diversity is to become a strength rather than a weakness, Europeans will have to advance from toleration and acceptance towards comprehension. It is only in such a common comprehension beyond and above national institutions and practice that the often-cited 'European Social Model' can assume something like reality. Wide-spread uneasiness with the constitutional process and with further European enlargement seems to reflect, above all, just this: People feel that Europe has grown far beyond their current cultural, emotional and intellectual capabilities, and that they should get a chance to catch up before any further enlargement takes place.

In coming to grips with this multifaceted Europe, it is not enough to learn *about* each other. Besides, information of the 'about' type is readily available nowadays. It would be a waste of time and fuel to travel to Duisburg only to gain knowledge of, say, the employment rate of older women in Spain or of the mortality risk of flight attendants.

Neither should we be too ready to learn *from* each other. Quite often this only means to take from another country what we *think* we like about it – without really understanding how and why it works there. Naïve policy borrowing without awareness of the institutional and cultural context has already produced very destructive effects, especially in transformation countries – of which Germany, since its unification, is one.

### Learning together

Rather than learning *from* each other we should endeavour to learn *together*. In a process of learning *together*, people from other countries will ask us questions about

our own country we would never ask ourselves or would never be asked at home. By trying to answer these questions, we will learn more about our own country. We will unveil the hidden meaning of institutions, traditions and narratives we normally take for granted. Only when we discover that the apparently same thing has a different meaning in a different society, only then do we advance towards *European* comprehension. Such comprehension is often missed in academic international comparisons where only stylised 'facts' are compared and where Eurospeak serves as the standardised linguistic medium. A vast number of European research projects fail to produce any new insight because each national team only contributes what they think they already know about their own country.

### Rewarding and at times painful

Learning *together* can be very rewarding whenever it actually takes place. However, it can also be difficult, painful and frustrating at times. If you should experience this, please just relax; there will be another opportunity in the next

activity. If, during these three days to come, a majority of you should experience moments of learning together, then your time and your fees, the considerable amount of European funding, the generous contributions of our sponsors – and please have a look at them in the participants' manual! – , a year's work of preparation and the commitment of about a hundred activists will all be well invested. In order to give mutual learning a chance to happen, we have designed this event in a way somewhat different from the conventional conference format:

Tomorrow's field trips are not intended as sideshows or sightseeing events but integrated into our thematic framework. The World Café scheduled for this afternoon and the Open Space on Saturday morning will be two sequences dedicated to intercultural learning whose outcome depends entirely on your active involvement and contribution. These methods may not be familiar to many of you although they are well established. So please trust in the process, trust our facilitators, and, above all, trust yourselves and your communicative abilities. It is you who will make it happen!

## A smell of the programme

**One US guest speaker at the start of the meeting.**

**One older artist, singing and playing the piano, offering her global repertoire from a gender perspective.**

**Three German key note speakers, representing social partners and government.**

**Four main speakers, each introducing one of the four University tracks programmed.**

**World Café and Open Space as joint learning experiments.**

**7 field trips, enabling the SUW participants to explore a former industry based region, now transforming itself into more service oriented economic activities.**

**Adapting to more diversity in the labour market, and cherishing its heritage and cultural innovations.**

**Here are some impressions of what happened, often in parallel sessions (four tracks, seven field trips).**

***Innovation and distribution:  
How to create a strong and durable economy***

Dr. Christian Weller, a senior economist at the US Center for American Progress, offered Europe(ans) a mirror in his plenary lecture at the

start of the Summer University. He analysed the relation between innovation and distribution of wealth. Weller showed the US economy - like a

number of others in industrialised countries - can be described as a 'split personality' economy. There is reasonable economic growth, resulting in corporate profits – nevertheless the economy fails to increase wages and produce (new) jobs like it once did. The result is a societal change of behaviour: Families take out massive amounts of debt. By March 2006, total household debt in the US related to disposable income, reached a total of 126 %, the highest on record. And the share of disposable income that US households have to pay their debt grew to 13,9 % in the first quarter of 2006 – the highest

level since 'the Fed' started keeping record (from 1980). Firms on the other hand choose to hoard cash from record profits, instead of re-investing it. From 2000 – 20005 the change in investment relative to the national GDP was – 1,2 % negative in the USA, despite record high profits and productivity growth. (In Germany it was even lower than in the USA (- 4,3 %) – in other OECD countries less dramatic: France + 0,2 % on average, Italy + 0,3, UK – 0,3). Weller saw the foundation for productivity growth 'eroding'. According to Weller public policy needs to address both : the lack of investments and the

weak labour markets, instead of seeing them as two separate developments. For his country he saw better perspectives in that case: *"With stronger productivity growth in the long run, the US will be better equipped to meet challenges of the aging society, and have an improved outlook for external imbalances. It would also result in a healthier demand side: more durable growth in the economy, because supply and demand go hand-in-hand. And business in this scenario would have more incentives to invest, because they know there will be more customers."*

### **Trade unions and low wages in hotels and food**

On day 2, Franz-Josef Möllenberg, president of the German trade union in food and hotels (NGG), analysed the relation between low wages in his industry and globalisation. Questioning trade union positions, he reflected on two very different subsectors where low pay is at stake: the hotel, restaurant and catering industry and a food multinational active in a lot of EU countries. In both the actual position of trade unions is insufficient to compensate for continuously dropping wage levels.

Germany has 18 regional collective Labour agreements in hotels, restaurants and catering. 11 have been cancelled without new arrangements. Structures dominated by small companies and 'black money' make it unnecessary for employers to have these collective contracts, as long as clients do not require it. And trade unions in Germany are not strong enough to extort. The only solution would be, Möllenberg argued, the installation of a national minimum wage in his country, *"the societal necessary alternative against a further spreading of*

*low wages and to counterbalance the "poor by labour" principle."*

Kraft Foods is at the other end of the spectre. The world's second food producer with 94000 workers in 70 countries. In 17 EU countries, Norway and two candidate countries 20 % of the company's turnover is realised. Huge differences exist between the (gross and net) wage levels in these countries, leading to a constant threat of employment losses in the more 'expensive' states. Möllenberg showed there is a rapid decline of these differences; between 2000 and 2006 labour costs in EU 25 raised with 0,5 %, in Germany 1,6, in Poland and Hungary 6,4 in Lithuania 11,1 – in UK they declined by 3,9 %! But still hourly wages within the EU differ enormously between 'old' and 'new' member states, and trigger the company to set up new – cheaper – locations and close them elsewhere.

Like in hotels and restaurants traditional trade union policy and instruments at Kraft's seem fading away. But Möllenberg explored new possibilities, partly from own experiences: *"Originally unions defined the conditions for labour at national levels. In the era of globalisation this is a dead end*

street. Unions should develop international networks and common standards for labour conditions. Moreover they should

co-operate with customers, consumer organisations, NGO's, churches and local groups of producers, to regain positions."

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## Tracking through Old and New Europe

**Four Tracks were at the base of the Duisburg programme, reflecting main themes in the field of Work within a growing Europe:**

**Track 1        The changing nature of work, employment & representation - are the European models still able to cope**

**Track 2        Life scripts and gender roles - how do they influence European employment regimes?**

**Track 3        Mobility of jobs, employability and skills of workers - what perspectives for European jobs in the globalisation**

**Track 4        Demographic change and ethnic diversity**

**All Tracks had a main speaker, followed by a series of workshops. A choice from what happened and was discussed.**

***From Track 2        Life scripts and gender roles - how do they influence European employment regimes?***

New forms of work - new gender orientations, Dr Stefan Höyng, University of Berlin, Germany

Dr Höyng made a much-appreciated speech about changes of gender roles in today's society, from a male perspective. The stereotypical male breadwinner model does no longer correspond to the wishes and living conditions of many men in western societies. Men who simultaneously opt for a career and a family life encounter problems, and their desire for a new balance between family and working life is therefore growing. Höyng's advice is to take men's expectations into account when family and working life policies are construed in the Member States. A decisive starting point would be a more equitable distribution of gainful employment between the genders.

Gender contracts in the arenas of work and life; Charlotta Krafft, SACO (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations), Sweden; Françoise Goffinet, Institut pour l'Égalité des femmes et des hommes, Belgium.

of a white-collar union-representative working for gender equality. Two specific issues that were raised concerned sexual harassment in the workplace and the possible links between a successful female career and public child care, access to household services and parental and pregnancy cash benefits.

In this workshop, the participants were offered some valuable insights on how gender arrangements at the workplace and in private relations are created and influenced by national legal regimes in two different countries - Sweden and Belgium. The discussion was held both from the perspective of a governmental agency and

Part time work or part time unemployment - contrasting European perspectives; Dr Johanna Forssell, National Institute for Working Life, Sweden; Dr Anita Haataja, Government Institute for Economic Research, Finland; Dr Clarissa Rudolph, Universität Marburg, Germany.

In many Member States, part time work is seen as a means to improve employment statistics and meet the needs of employers as well as employees. In recent years, however, some governments and researchers have started to focus on the inherent problems of this employment form in regard to employment conditions and access to work. Firstly, part time workers generally do not enjoy as favourable working conditions as full time employees. This is recognized in the directive on part time. Secondly, recent research indicates that part time work also leads to involuntary part time work or “part time unemployment”.

The Member States look differently upon this phenomenon. Their culture, national labour market regimes, economic situations, laws and welfare models, decide whether they see it as problematic or not. The speakers agreed that the most important aspect of part time work is the gender aspect and the way the sharing of household duties, childcare benefits and education is distributed in each country respectively. An issue that was raised during the discussions was that the Member States’ statistics usually don’t specify the voluntary or involuntary character of part time work - which renders comparisons between the countries very difficult.

The impact of European regulations on gender relations; Marie-Cécile Escande Varniol, Université de Lyon, France; Marie Nordström, Gender Equality Ombudsman, Sweden; Sonia Jung, lawyer, Germany.

The workshop discussed the impact that European legislation on discrimination has had in the EU Member States, especially in regard to gender. The speakers basically agreed that this impact has been considerable. An overview suggests that although most Member States had legislation on non-discrimination before the European rules were introduced, EU gender equality law, including case law from the European Court of Justice, has forced the Member States to reshape not only their legislation, but also their previous cultural and ideological views on the relationship between men and women. The changes are numerous: the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination have been introduced in the Member States and extend to the employment situation as well as the whole recruitment process, the burden of proof directive has made it easier for employees to win discrimination cases, the protection of pregnant women’s and parents’ rights has improved and the possibility to take positive action has been extended in most states. The EU rules have had some surprising consequences, one being that men have appealed to them a lot more than what was originally predicted, another being that many of the countries’ pension regimes have had to be reviewed. An indirect impact of the EU regulation is, moreover, that traces of it can now be found in national judgements and administrative decisions all over Europe.



## World Café and Open Space – participants as experts in Europe

To make most of all the competences present in Duisburg, new methods had been developed to facilitate into international and intercultural learning on actual topics.

World Café and Open Space enabled participants to connect and work together on what they brought to Duisburg.

### **World Café**

As SUW gathered experts from all over Europe, opportunities for intercultural learning and understanding were needed. The concept of World Café as an interactive approach for bringing people together around questions that matter therefore was introduced by Prof. Barbara Mettler-v.Meibom and Andreas Terhoeven on the first day. The basic idea of world cafe is that people meet at café house tables in a relaxed atmosphere and link their ideas about different questions. Usually in three rounds of discussion the participants create a net of collective wisdom and ideas. Listening carefully and focussing on the essential ideas, this is the basic attitude during the world cafe.

The World Café method is very simple: 4-5 participants are seated or stand around a table. The tables are equipped with paper tablecloths so people can write or sketch on them. The café host poses a question, and for 20-30 minutes they explore this question together, link and connect ideas. Then they switch tables except for the table hosts who remain at their tables during the whole process. After a few rounds some participants share insights

and thoughts in plenary. Two questions, many answers and ideas.

Two common general questions were put into the SUW World Café:

- What are – from your personal experience – the most important concerns?
- Where will you be in a position to address these concerns in the coming two years?

Each table hosted people of different nationalities, professional backgrounds and experiences, resulting in varying answers to these questions. Some observed an astonishing unity in their views while others needed the allotted time to gain common ground regarding meaning and values. Keeping a friendly, hospitable atmosphere was very easy as everyone was open to new perspectives and insights and generated deeper questions. Discussions around question 1 – the most important concerns – dealt with gender equality, employment of the generation 50+, trade union representation in a globalized Europe and life long learning. The second question was quite a challenge for many tables as looking into the near future is not a common exercise.

### **Open Space for new common ideas**

15 international groups working on 15 topics

**Open Space** is another interactive large group intervention method which relies on the individual creativity of the participants. It was also introduced by Mettler-v.Meibom and Terhoeven. The open space technology founded by Harrison

Owen opens the space for ideas and interests of the participants, based on the idea that the participants have enough potential to find the best solutions for the chosen subject. The method requires a clear and understandable subject, which

meets the needs and interest of the participants. The results of the working groups only depend on the input of the participants.

The proceedings follow the principles of self-organizing processes: In the opening period, the setting of the agenda takes place. Those who have an important concern and are willing to take responsibility for initiating a discussion about their topic or a project post it on defined time slots on a Bulletin Board. People who want to engage in the topic sign up for the group but are allowed to change groups whenever they feel appropriate. Only few rules apply to Open Space. The most important is the "Law of Two Feet": participants are allowed to walk away from any discussion where they do not feel engaged or are not learning or contributing any more. Besides that, OS is based on four principles:

1. *Whoever comes is the right person.*
2. *Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.*
3. *Whenever it starts is the right time.*
4. *When it is over, it is over.*

### 15 topics in parallel sessions

Usually, an Open Space Conference takes 1-2 days, so during ESUdA only a glimpse of the Open Space method could be provided during the 3 hours it lasted. Nevertheless, people engaged eagerly in the 15 topics that were posted on the bulletin board immediately upon start.

*Sexual orientation in the workplace: The experience of gay, lesbian and bisexual employees*

*Common fundamental values in Europe concerning social dialogue*

*How to organise a network between the Summer Universities – without bureaucracy?*

*Vocational education for young people and adults – Creating an international network for enterprise training partnerships*

*Vulnerability and social sustainability at work in the enlarged Europe*

*Setting up a European expert network for social rights*

*Life-long learning for elder employees – Establishing common criteria for the verification and certification of vocational training*

*Externalisation and subcontracting: What challenges for old and new Europe?*

*Create a European journal of labour market analysis and innovation and a network of contributors*

*Changes at work and citizenship: Good jobs for better democracy*

*How can we motivate more companies to participate in the ESUdA?*

*Conflict solution mechanisms at work – is there a convergence in Europe?*

*Restructuring of the European defence industry: What are the consequences?*

*CSR: What are the common European values? Practical methods of implementation within companies*

*Race discrimination: Consequences for the work place*

A number of these discussions and project planning sessions have resulted in follow-up activities.

For more information on the methods see <http://www.communio-essen.de/alt/methoden.htm#Grossgruppen> and <http://www.terhoeven-team.de>

**"At events like this one I realise how important and inspiring it is to meet people from different countries, with various educational and professional backgrounds"**

## Field trips: Intercultural learning in the Ruhr Gebiet

### *Confronting regional history and European citizenship*

SUW moved to various locations to explore what the Ruhr Gebiet offers as to new models, paradigms and developments. The participants went on the move during 8 parallel field trips. Here meetings between German stakeholders and a European audience produced lots of new learning and interesting experiences for both sides.

Short impressions of some of the trips.

### *Life scripts & living arrangements – bringing immigrants and a business headquarter together in Schüngelbergsiedlung*

Work, life scripts and living arrangements are strongly interrelated. This field trip led participants to the workers living quarter Schüngelbergsiedlung, a project of the International Architecture Exhibition Emscher Park 1989-1999 (Internationale Bauausstellung, IBA), and the headquarters of its owner, the largest real estate company in the Rhine-Ruhr, the THS (Treuhandstelle Bergbau) located in the old mine "Zeche Nordstern", both in the north of Gelsenkirchen. The Schüngelbergsiedlung consists of a remodelled quarter and a new quarter, the former inhabited by 80 % immigrants, the latter by 20 %, common spaces, a rainwater harvesting system, and a landmark site. The inhabitants have

created peaceful, cooperative neighbourhoods they identify strongly with. The modernized, impressive interior of the "Zeche Nordstern" with its prized open glass-wall bureaus and convention rooms gave us a glimpse of THS's culture of work: openness, transparency, co-operation. We all got a feeling of the high living quality the workers are offered – for a decent price – and the thorough care of the THS administration for the people, rather for merely the buildings they are managing.

For pictures and information see also [http://www.ge-buer.com/2001\\_08\\_schuengelbersiedlung/index.htm](http://www.ge-buer.com/2001_08_schuengelbersiedlung/index.htm)

### *Designing an urban environment with intercultural quality of life: field trip to Poets Quarter in Duisburg*

The visit to the "Dichterviertel" (Poets Quarter) in Duisburg-Hamborn made many of us envious of the beautifully built and maintained accommodation available, particularly the shared courtyards, and the plots that people had made into their own carefully tended allotments or gardens, often with shed or veranda. Comparing it with much of the public or private rented accommodation available in London, for

example, it seemed astonishing, and sad, that the Rhein Lippe owners had difficulty renting out the flats. The fact that many of the residents were of Turkish origin appeared to be one cause of this, although we heard about many of the initiatives undertaken by Rhein Lippe to promote greater tenant participant, intercultural dialogue and facilities for communal activities, as well as the work on updating

the standard of accommodation, originally built for workers in local coal mines.

We were then taken to the “Zollverein” former coking plant for a delicious lunch and fascinating tour of the site, now designated by UNESCO as a world heritage site. Closed in 1993 when world coke prices fell sharply, it was astonishing to hear that once started up, the coking ovens could never be turned off or all the fire bricks would shatter, so they had to

remain at a constant temperature during the life of the plant. Therefore when demand for coke increased, it was not possible to restart the plant, and a new plant was built in the Ruhr area in the late 1990s, leaving this site a fascinating, but expensive, monument to history. Considering the thousands of jobs lost when the plant closed provided a stark example of the effects of fluctuations in world markets on the lives of workers.

### ***From in-house vocational training center to a cutting-edge education company: field trip to Zollverein***

Competence Center “Zollverein” used to be an in-house vocational center. Nowadays it serves as a successful education company in the region. Participants could learn about the development of a network of subsidiaries the Center has started, and the content of the offered training programs. Currently the Center covers 38 stakeholders in a common development network and offers vocational training at all these different locations (branch offices). This basically enables participants to learn new skills in 38 local institutions, and highly increases effectiveness of the center as a whole.

Three topics were of a special interest:

- the training need analysis the Center conducts, also at the macro-level
- the different stakeholders of the network development; these are:

- participants, instructors, labour offices, future employers, employers' representation organisations
- strategies to enable continuing adaptation of the content of training programs to labour market needs, such as consultations with representatives of the regional labour offices or analysis of the regional demand for vocational skills.

The second part of the trip – visiting the former coking plant, a part of the UNESCO heritage, now a cultural center - was a unique experience. We had a chance to walk at the plant premises in small groups accompanied by very friendly and knowledgeable guides and see how traditional manufacturing is gradually taken over by nature (beautiful plants) and cultural life (cultural and leisure facilities).

**“This industrial park and gazometer... Wow! I wish I had my diving equipment with me!” (Polish participant)**

### ***Melting pot Ruhr Area – a century of migration***

Our bus stopped at the mosque in one Essen's city quarters. Here we discussed the actual situation and the role of the mosque in building interrelations between (young) Turkish citizen and the traditional German workers and families in the city. Together the Imam and the pastor informed us about their intense contacts, joint initiatives and solving problems arising now and then. Proud the Imam and

his group of citizens showed us the many activities and facilities they had built up, in particular to cope with youngsters.

Next stop was the home port of our non-standard pastor: the former industrial site ‘Zeche Carl’. A living illustration of the constant restructuring the Ruhr Area has experienced the last three decades. When the industry had to close as a manufacturing company the pastor asked

permission to use it for re-qualification of a group of trainees, who had suddenly lost their vocational training places at the company and seemed to be lost for the future labour market. Since, the Zeche Carl has gradually moved into a huge training center (nowadays more for current jobs in the service industry), a trusted and respected youth center with regular pop concerts and events for thousands of visitors, a restaurant run by trainees (which we tested with pleasure), a starting point for a variety of innovative small companies recruiting their personnel from the Zeche. Around 80 employees and freelancers nowadays run the project, with the pastor-entrepreneur still as one of the driving forces. Want to discover the area

by bicycle? Contact the Zeche's travel office and book a trip along the hundreds of kilometers long cycle paths using ancient railway tracks, constructed under the umbrella of the Zeche

In one hour we went through the social and economic history, its decline and the following recovery. Not a big governmental policy initiative made the difference – it was ordinary and highly motivated citizens who started and pushed through. Is this a lesson for Europe as a whole?

Happy and startled of this experience our multi country group went back. Zeche Carl is sort of a wonder, showing the power of imagination, perseverance and management competencies in the non commercial sector.

**“Ah, this German organization! It was lovely to know exactly what will happen and when, the only problem being the weather - this aspect they did not manage to organise as needed!”**

## Follow-up projects and activities

In October 2006 a group of participants and some newcomers evaluated the Duisburg Summer University during a two-day post-conference meeting. The group of 24 also developed future plans: new projects, new products, a 3<sup>rd</sup> SUV to be held in Poland in September 2006.

Here are some of these ideas and projects, and their actual status.

### ***Restructuring in social responsible ways, learning processes for Bulgaria and Romania***

This project is directed to socially responsible restructuring in accession countries – promotion of the social partners role to anticipate and accompany consequences at regional level. It is co-funded by the DG Employment and social affairs (within the program social dialogue and industrial relations).

Main objective is to strengthen the role of the social partners - and stakeholders in general - in Romania and Bulgaria, to anticipate and socially accompany restructuring. Experiences will be shared, and expertise from social partners and stake holders in other Member States (old and new) used.

The project seeks to raise awareness with local social partners and stakeholders about the opportunities to find solutions for the restructuring cases. It is aimed at promoting knowledge on good practices of restructuring management. Moreover, it should promote dialogue amongst the social partners and stakeholders, to generalise examples of best practice and capacity in this area. Such dialogue will engage the actors in discussions over the challenges and opportunities for the social partners at regional level in the context of restructuring.

The project is running.

## ***IRENE - Innovative Restructuring – European Networks of Experts***

Restructuring has been a consistent issue for European societies since decades. After being mostly reactive to these multidimensional and often brutal changes, Europe tries to be more proactive. This shift is not very easy. If best and innovative practices are growing, there are still a lot of obstacles for innovative and responsible restructuring. In the IRENE project, submitted to the Commission under the new Progress program, several partners from 11 EU countries decided to join their networks and resources to contribute to the establishment of a European community of restructuring experts. They will do this by:

- establishing at European levels a relevant groups of actors and strengthening their approaches

- providing multi stake holders expertise and benchmarks
- going deeper in critical issues and to exchange experiences about best practices
- stimulating crossborder experiments in pilot groups, including multinational corporations who conduct restructuring across national borders and by involving actors who are voluntarily willing to test ideas, concepts and models developed in another country in the contexts of their own country.

From the work in this community they will draw perspectives and commitments to mainstream innovative and responsible restructuring.

## ***METIS, a European E-Magazine on Work***

The idea was there in one of the Open Space activities in Duisburg. And soon after the first steps were taken. From October 2006 we have a grown up E-Magazine named METIS after a Greek Goddess. METIS is a monthly magazine, up to this time only in French. METIS covers developments in the field of Work in Europe. Not only what is happening in Brussels or at national levels. Also news and debates on actual developments in companies, the flexicurity debate in different countries of Europe. Issues are migration, discrimination at workplaces, the role of NGO's in the labour market. Most of the 27 EU member states have been covered in articles or interviews. METIS has a French group of editors, in which social partners are represented. And since January 2007 also a European Committee of Editors is in place, with

representatives from Italy, Poland, Bulgaria, Portugal, Germany, UK and The Netherlands.

The European Committee of Editors met June 22 in Paris and decided to expand the product METIS into two thematic English editions next season.

New funding will have to be found, to further develop METIS into the guide and community builder at a European scale, readable for different groups of readers and language speakers.

Join us by clicking in at [www.metiseurope.eu](http://www.metiseurope.eu). And make your colleagues and friends aware that METIS is there and something could be in for them. Let us know what you would like to have in it. And give us your personal reaction how to improve it, responding to needs and wishes in your networks.

## ***A European Association in the making***

In the concluding SUW session on September 2 2006, the idea of establishing a formal European Association was discussed. Such an association would be more stable and

more able to organise durable contacts, projects and activities in the growing network. Most participants supported this light form of formalisation. Some of them even paid their contribution to the future

association in advance, just before leaving Duisburg.

At the post-conference meeting in October the proposal was made more concrete. It seems the formal Association will exist soon, according to Belgian law. The draft formulates as objectives "exchanges of reflections and practices, studies, training,

and every useful activity on labour and employment with a view to contribute to the development of more solidarity in societies".

Individuals as well as institutions can be member. Let us know if you would consider to join the association.

### **Infoexchange-platform**

Soon after the Summer University we experimented with a special interactive website/blog, to discuss and prepare special topics within our informal network. The site is co-ordinated by German colleague Detlef Krusekopf, and will be used in the preparation phase of the eventual 3<sup>rd</sup> SUV in Poland.

Using the Internet in a productive and 'learning together' way is one of the

challenges for future co-operation and networking. Any one wanting to participate in developing the theme '*Migration within Europe – trends and local experiences*' is asked to let us know on [wim.sprenger@xs4all.nl](mailto:wim.sprenger@xs4all.nl), so that we can open the domain for you. The same for people from your network who might be interested.

## **A 3<sup>rd</sup> SUW in Poland 2008?**

Join us in Poland September 2008 - ?

The Steering Committee has taken the first necessary steps in preparing a third Summer University of Work. Now we are in the phase of looking for sponsors and developing an inspiring and attractive programme. We reckon on you to help us find old and new participants, in particular from other new member states.

Will we succeed to further develop European networking in the field of Work?

Anna Kwiatkiewicz, one of the organisers in Warsaw::

*"Poland will host 3<sup>rd</sup> Summer University of Work in 2008! Our ambition is to make it a tripartite dialogue forum by attracting representatives of trade unions, employers and NGOs as well as many more participants from the CEEC to ensure a more balanced dialogue between "old" and "new" member states. We need your help, please, do not hesitate to let us know how we can make it more interesting for you!"*

Contact person: Anna Kwiatkiewicz ([anna.kwiatkiewicz@brunhes.pl](mailto:anna.kwiatkiewicz@brunhes.pl); + 48 506 807 208).

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This Newsletter has been produced for participants of the Duisburg Summer University of Work and other interested people. You are free to send it to any one you think who would be interested. Reactions or questions to The Steering Committee SUW, [wim.sprenger@xs4all.nl](mailto:wim.sprenger@xs4all.nl).