

CONFERENCE REPORT



Sustainable work – a challenge in times of economic crises

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Sustainable work – a challenge in times of economic crises

More and more research results indicate that the achievement of sustainable and socially inclusive knowledge economy depends on what happens in the workplace. It is no longer reasonable to expect that the Lisbon Vision can be achieved solely by influencing input to production such as qualifications and levels of employment in the labour market. Rather policy intervention should influence the design of work organisation to ensure that all employees can use and develop their competence and creative potential to the full. There is enough evidence to show that such forms of work organisation enhance competitiveness, quality of working life and the effective functioning of the labour market. The problem is one of the dissemination amongst enterprises.

Kenneth Abrahamsson, Programme Director, the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, opened the conference on behalf of the organisers and pointed out that the aim of the conference was to further penetrate what kind of research is needed for sustainable work systems and how it should be organised in order to be used as an input to the Post-Lisbon Vision.

Jorma Karppinen, Director, Eurofound, said that the concept of sustainability ought to be discussed all along the EU in this turbulent time. The word needed to be looked at in all its dimensions, not only as environmental, but also as economical, political, human and psychological-mental sustainability.

Jorma Karppinen took the example of Ireland, the home of the Celtic tiger that managed to double the number of jobs in about the last ten years. Today, every second euro spent by public money is borrowed money, and he meant, that neither is it economically sustainable nor is the employment situation sustainable. No-one wants to go back to 20-25 per cent unemployment as it was in the 70s and 80s. He emphasised that the key question is how long the EU and the US economic stimulation programmes will last, and when the recovery takes place.

Jorma Karppinen also pointed towards the problem of the Ageing Europe. Today the relation is based on four persons working to one dependant person. In a not so distant future, the ratio will be two to one. This is not a way to sustain the way of European life and the living standard. The European policy has been to put the public finances in a good state, but due to the economic crisis they are now in a bad state, which will make the management of the Ageing Europe much more difficult.

At the EU conference on social inclusion, that Jorma Karppinen had visited the same morning, the Post-Lisbon Vision has been very much discussed. He believed that the Post-Lisbon time will be a difficult time as the economic recovery will be slow and weak, and that employment recovery will lag behind the economic recovery. In that respect, the Post-Lisbon Vision has to find new ideas. The basic goal of more and better jobs will remain, but the ways have to be changed in order to find sustainable employment. So far the economic dip has not been followed by a large employment dip thanks to many bipartite



"Many bipartite and tripartite programmes have been developed in different parts of EU. The European social model has worked well."

Jorma Karppinen, Director,
Eurofound, Dublin.

and tripartite programmes developed in the different parts of the EU. This has made the EU labour market more resilient than in the US. Here the European social model has worked well.

Most important is to develop the demand side, i.e. how to generate sustainable, productive competitive and satisfying jobs, that makes people motivated and satisfied, and which make people feel that they are a winner.

Jorma Karppinen ended by talking about the importance of the social partners and the social dialogue in this process and the importance of the EU programme on *New skills for new jobs*.

The European Welfare Model in Time of Crisis: What future for the social investment approach?

“The human capital aspect of investment is constantly at risk of being lost in discussions on longer term policymaking.”

Joakim Palme, Director, the Swedish Institute for Future Studies, Stockholm.

The economic crises will probably force politicians and policymakers beyond the immediate response to take a longer term perspective to avoid reproducing the recent crises. Other challenges such as climate change are also supporting a prolonged time horizon for policymaking.

Social investments have often low priority in long-term policymaking.

– The human capital aspect of investment is constantly at risk of being lost in discussions on longer term policymaking. The social investment perspective demands new thinking and new kinds of discussions, **Joakim Palme**, Director, the Swedish Institute for Future Studies, stressed.

Many important academic discussions on policies are held in closed circles focusing on very specific issues.

– We have been discussing social policy separately from education policy, and education policy separately from labour market policy, Joakim Palme said, and pointed out that the same phenomenon is going on in the political world:

– They tend to discuss sustainability in closed circles around ecological, economic, political or social aspects.

Joakim Palme could instead see opportunities of cross-fertilization where different perspectives may have synergetic effects.

– But we should not lose the academic rigour of the discussion. We have also to be aware of the constraints, the economic crises as well as climate change, is imposing on policymaker in medium term perspective. Hopefully, these challenges will provide opportunities to innovate, he said and emphasised:

– In the next six months we have a chance to feed new ideas and new thinking into the Post-Lisbon discussion. The time is really right to invent a new future for Europe.

Maintain human capital

Joakim Palme referred to a book about social investment perspectives. One author has focused on early child care and how it affects parents' as well as children's situations. Publicly funded child care can be a mean to maintain human capital, the mother's or father's skills, and to help them to keep in close contact with the labour market, but it also implies that children are provided a stimulating environment at an early age.

– There are alternatives to combine work and family life, but these are less attractive from a human capital perspective, Joakim Palme concluded.

In another contribution, three different principles of practical labour market policies are identified; protection, investment and (re) modification. The general trend, emphasised in training or in policies removing

obstacles to the return to the labour market, is focused on incentives. In the current crisis with long periods of high and persistent unemployment it might be inadequate to only strengthen work incentives. Active labour market policies targeted to human capital formation seems preferable. In order to respond to the crises, job creation programmes might also be needed in a medium term perspective.

– There is no way around the fact that more investments today will mean less consumption, Joakim Palme emphasised, and elaborated how to get the available resources to long-term social investments:

– We need to borrow even more in order to make the necessary investments.

This regards firms, individuals and possibly the public sector.

He thought that it may be possible to extract necessary taxes or encourage people or firms to make the necessary investments. It will depend on possibilities not only on national level, but also on frameworks available on international level and, not least, the discussion on a European level.

A tilt towards cooperation

Since the Second World War various kinds of social models have been developed in Europe and also in the Anglo-American countries, for instance, strategies of cooperation between employers and trade unions.

– This sort of strategy of cooperation was threatened by the neo-liberal agenda. As result of the financial crises we now can see a tilt in the international economic system and new opportunities to develop and to promote strategies of cooperation between the social partners, Joakim Palme said.

Sustainable and socially inclusive economy – panel discussion



“The new strategy is not going to focus on radically different aspects from those of the current strategy for growth and job.”

Robert Strauss, Head of Unit,
DG Employment, Brussels.

*Disclaimer: “The views expressed are purely those of the speaker and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission”.

Does the present Lisbon agenda address the needs and ambitions of all its stakeholders and will the fundamentals of its three pillars be the same when the recession ends?

The keywords of the Lisbon Agenda 2010 are “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion – and a sustainable environment”. The pillar about sustainable environment was added after the Gothenburg summit 2001.

The Lisbon Strategy has been implemented in two steps and the first was between 2000-2005. Faced with the globalisation and the challenge of a new knowledge-driven economy, an overall strategy was introduced, which included transition to a knowledge-based economy and society by better policies for information society and R&D, by stepping up the process of structural reform for competitiveness and innovation and by completing the internal market. Furthermore, the strategy was aimed at modernising the European social model, invest in people and combat social exclusion, sustain the healthy economic outlook and favourable growth prospects.

In 2004, a review of the Lisbon Strategy was done by a group of experts, lead by Win Kok, the former prime minister of the Netherlands. They proposed a new start focusing on two principal tasks, delivering stronger, lasting growth, and more and better jobs. All Member States made a commitment to draw up national reform programmes.

– We are now almost at the end of the period of the Lisbon Strategy and talking about the Post-Lisbon Vision or the EU 2020, as proposed by President Manuel Barroso, and furthermore the world is in a period of extreme economic instability, **Elisabeth Lagerlöf**, the moderator of the panel discussion, said, and asked:

– Did the Lisbon Agenda really deliver for all European citizens and will the fundamentals of the three pillars be the same when the recession ends?

She also reminded the audience of what Vladimir Spidla, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social affairs and Equal Opportunities, said the day before the conference: “Europe’s labour market, squeezed by the economic crises, can find new dynamism through social innovation”.

Environment more prominent

– The proposal for the new strategy is not going to focus on radically different aspects from those of the current strategy for growth and job. The environmental pillar will probably be more prominent in the post-Lisbon strategy, **Robert Strauss***, Head of Unit, DG Employment, Brussels, opened the panel discussion and added:

– That’s essentially where we are in Brussels today.

In the next strategy the environmental issue could form a third strand or become more clearly identified within the employment and the growth strands.

In the worst recession and financial crises in the last fifty years, politicians and policymakers also have to face long term challenges, such as ageing population, increasing competition and globalisation in general.

– Social policies in this field start with jobs. To achieve sustainable work we have to have jobs to begin with. One third of people of working age in Europe is without a job, **Stefan Hult**, Director, the Swedish Ministry of Employment, Stockholm, pointed out, and continued:

– It has been the case for a long time and it has now been aggravated by the crises.

Lack of cooperation and coordination between various policy areas, for instance between education policy, employment policy, environment policy and social policy were frequent issues in the panel discussion.

– Has the Lisbon strategy been a success or a failure? I think neither, **Jan Andersson**, former Member of the European Parliament, concluded and demanded a stronger coordination in the future:

– There has been too weak links between the pillars of the strategy. The process has been very much dominated by macro-economic issues, while employment issues and social issues were set back.

The big challenges are climate change, demographic trends with an ageing population, strengthening demands on the public sector and, probably, lack of labour in a decade. Furthermore, the diversity is increasing in the society.

– The labour market is changing very fast. Many jobs in manufacturing disappear while more service jobs and more service-based jobs are created, Jan Andersson said and he was concerned about the impact of the crises on young people's opportunities in the future:

– We have to work with young people who leave the school and don't get any job. If they don't get a foot into the labour market they may be out of the working life for many years. It is often difficult to get them back in work again.

Jan Andersson also raised the question about the political involvement on national level as well on European level:

– To be very honest, how many in the Swedish Parliament are engaged in the Lisbon Process? Very few know about it. How is the European Parliament involved in the process? We write our reports, but they are not reflected in guidelines. The European Council does not care.

Young people hardest hit

The recent crisis is to some extent very special. It is very deep, it is global and it is very financial.

– But in terms of labour market impact the crisis is really just accentuating trends that we have seen for decades, **Donald Storrie**, Head of Unit, Eurofound, Dublin, said and referred to some specific observations.

According to World Trade Organisation (WTO), China, not the US, not Germany, is now the world's biggest exporter of goods. In the wake of globalisation and strengthened competition there has been dramatic change in a labour market that is losing millions of mid- to high-skilled manual professions.

– During the last 15 years we have seen a job growth in Europe at least at the top of wage and skill distribution, Donald Storrie explained and expressed concern about the long term effects of the crises:

– Some people get knocked out of the labour market and they won't come back, or some will certainly not come fully back.

The unemployment pattern has a clear age profile. Very young people are



“How many in the Swedish Parliament are engaged in the Lisbon process?”

Jan Andersson, former Member of the European Parliament, Helsingborg.



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Eurofound, Dublin.

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DG Employment, Brussels.

very hard hit. Young people are hard hit, and middle age people reasonable hard hit, while older people are not so hard hit. According to previous experience, on average, these young people will join the work force again when the recovery comes.

– Due to demographic imbalances there will probably be more jobs for young people, Donald Storrie thought, but he emphasised that millions of people, young people, throughout Europe are at risk of losing their jobs. Many of the unemployed will not be a part of the recovery, which will cause serious problems for individuals as well as the whole economy.

– To put it brutally; if a 63 years old person is pensioned out of the labour force, we lose two years of the person’s productive life. If a teenager or a 20 years old person is unemployed, we will perhaps lose decades of contributions to the society, not speaking about social cohesion, he concluded and questioned whether the labour market authorities alone will be capable to cope with this kind of unemployment.

Donald Storrie emphasised the importance of active labour market policies compared to traditional measures, in particular promoting participation in the society. He referred to experience of Swedish policy in the 90’s:

– A lot of people were still kept in the society and when the business cycle turned up, these people were still in the game.

To be able to develop an active labour market policy and promote its participatory role there is also a need to know what is going on at the Educational Department and the Social Affairs Department. In the 90’s Sweden launched an adult education initiative which basically gave young unemployed people a high school education.

– It is a rather good policy in terms of social inclusion and participation. There are also other benefits in terms of maintenance in the society, Donald Storrie said and emphasised:

– Young people at risk for unemployment are probably the biggest labour market problem in this recession. It deserves all of our attention.

Where and how can we get better jobs?

The academia tends to think in silences as well as the employment world, and perhaps also the educational and political world are doing so.

– But at least the “*New skills for new jobs*” initiative was explicitly built on the cooperation between education, training and employment, Robert Strauss stressed.

The most important issue is perhaps to provide the right skills for future jobs or the right skills for the right jobs. The challenge is about enabling all people at all skills levels to have better skills so that they are equipped for better jobs and the right jobs.

– The key to that more jobs also are better jobs, is that people are equipped with the right skills. Some new jobs are, of course, not better jobs, in particular precarious jobs. Low skill jobs are often precarious, Robert Strauss explained and continued:

– The “*New skills for new jobs*” strategy is not only about high skills. It is about all levels.

In the future there will be job opportunities on all skills levels; however, lower skilled jobs will proportionally decrease. According to forecasts the medium skilled jobs will represent about 50 per cent of the work force up to 2020, while higher level jobs will increase from 20 to 25 per cent or even more.

The Lisbon Strategy, as well as probably also the next one, is about longer-

term structural changes and how to face major challenges such as demography, global warming, globalisation and technological development.

– It is not very much about day to day, week to week or even political cycle changes, Robert Strauss said, and emphasised that these challenges require long-lasting and very often difficult policy implementation. Moreover, it is crucial and important that short-term policies do not counteract the longer-term structural challenges.

Make work environment more creative

Stefan Hult pointed out the need for more instruments to make the working environment more creative and make the workplaces more safe and healthy. The Swedish Ministry of Employment wants also to face issues concerning productivity and growth in connection with working conditions. Furthermore, the government will try to find ways how to promote individuals to utilize their skills and provide opportunities to improve skills.

– We have to put more positive perspectives into the notion of working environment. We are now trying to do that on national level as a national plan together with the social partners.

The plan is mainly focused on four different areas; inclusive working life, safety and health, competitiveness, and working conditions as a competitive tool, Stefan Hult said.

Improvements for women and older workers

Jan Andersson concluded that many jobs have been created during the last decade, but not according to the explicit goals. Women's and older employees' situation on the labour market have been improved. However, many of the new jobs are precarious.

He raised the issues of education and training:

– Lifelong learning goes often to well-educated people. Low-skilled people may not want education or they are afraid of the situation or companies do not see the need for education of low skilled employees. We have to change that.

Sometimes it is argued that there is a contradiction between free movement of capital, labour, goods and a good social model, but Jan Andersson was opposed to that:

– We need free movement as well as a good social model. We should for instance have common legislation on minimum levels of health and safety, including working time. If we begin to compete with low standards of health and safety we will not have a European Union anymore.

New jobs in personal services

Donald Storrer saw most of the impacts of the recession as “business as usual”:

– How to create new jobs is quite a difficult question to answer. Of course, it's related to skills, generic skills, problem-solving skills and social soft skills.

He was positive to the Swedish idea of individual learning account as a mean for lifelong learning, while he was a bit more sceptical to some areas of job creation such as 'environmental jobs' and 'green jobs'.

Services will still be required in a more and more global economy, but these new jobs will probably not be performed in Europe.

– Our routine jobs don't require face-to-face services. These jobs will probably not be available in Europe, but personal services in low skill and low wage jobs will continue to grow, he concluded.



“We have to put more positive perspectives into the notion of working environment.”

Stefan Hult, Director, the Swedish Ministry of Employment, Stockholm.



“The employees in the caring sector do manual work. How do EU policies address these huge numbers of people, millions and millions of manual workers?”

Peter Nolan, Professor, University of Leeds.



“A much bigger challenge is the demographic change and probably a massive skill shortage in five years and certainly within ten years.”

Shawn Mendes, Director of Education, the Swedish National Agency for Education, Stockholm.

Lack of evidence

In the audience, some participants reacted strongly to the panel’s presentations. **Peter Nolan**, Professor, University of Leeds, said he was perplexed and questioned the conclusion that routine, low paid, low status positions in Europe will migrate to high paid jobs.

– There is no evidence for that. In the UK there are ten million people roughly doing low status, low paid manual jobs, ten million out of the total work force of 26.5 million, he pointed out.

The caring system is the fastest growing sector in the UK, but these employees are badly paid and they do not get or need much training. Therefore the demand for education and training was questioned.

– The employees in the caring sector do manual work. They are lifting people around. How will the EU policies address these huge numbers of people, millions and millions of manual workers in Europe, Peter Nolan asked.

Annika Härenstam, Professor, University of Gothenburg, called for attention to the panel’s “political correct idea” that lifelong learning and education will solve the problems on the labour market:

– More people are overqualified than under-qualified in Sweden and in many other countries. The floor has to be swept. Elderly has to be taken care of. These jobs have to be done. How can it be solved by training and educating people more?

The panel has also brought forward the lack of a time horizon and that too much effort is spent on the current crises. **Shawn Mendes**, Director of Education, the Swedish National Agency for Education, Stockholm, stressed these points of view:

– We are facing much bigger challenges than the short term problems of unemployment in 2009 and 2010. A much bigger challenge is the demographic change and probably a massive skill shortage in five years and certainly within ten years.

Some countries, for example Sweden, are investing in human capital and training. The adult invest initiative is preparing for the looming skill shortage, but in general there is still a lack of cooperation between education authorities and labour market authorities.

– Without cooperating and keeping our eyes on long term challenges we are going to fail and forget the bigger challenges, Shawn Mendes said.

Several in the panel were concerned about the remarks about over-qualification. Robert Strauss responded:

– Ten per cent of young people in Europe are neither in education nor in training nor even in a job. Those ten per cent could have had the sort of jobs you are talking about. They can’t now. They won’t now. They don’t now.

Elderly care is heavy, but it is not unqualified jobs. It is not only about lifting people, but also about social communication with elderly people and their relatives. Moreover, they have to communicate with people from other countries and cultures. Jan Andersson did not agree about unqualified jobs in the caring system and added:

– The problem is not that people are overqualified. A bigger problem is that people don’t have the right qualifications.

He argued also for a system with short education, sensitive to labour market changes, to make it easier for people to adapt to new work tasks.

Donald Storrie elaborated his observations about the U-shape curve:

– Recent trends in job quality show a polarisation, a kind of U-shape form. There is a growth in very low paid jobs and an increase of jobs at the other end.

The evidence is very strong, not least in the UK.

He also emphasised the lack of consistency between short term and long term policies.

High qualified jobs = better jobs?

Stefan Hult was convinced that there was a need for better cooperation between the education system and the labour market system. Moreover, different measures have to be developed for upgrading so-called low qualified jobs.

The difference between low qualified and high qualified jobs was on debate between the panel and the audience. **Frank Pot**, Professor, Nijmegen School of Management, asked for better definition of some concepts. “High qualified jobs” was used as a synonym of “better jobs”:

– In my opinion it’s not the same. Low qualified jobs or low skill jobs can also be good jobs. They should be very good jobs, because we will always have quite a number people in this kind of work.

Frank Pot wanted to make a distinction between decent work and precarious work. A decent job implies a minimum wage and basic safety and health. The work content is also important. More autonomy, more complexity with a mixture between easy and difficult task, workplace participation, and timely as well as correct feedback may step by step create better jobs.

– Cleaning and routine jobs can be improved and become better jobs.

The U-shape of labour market development as the main trend raised several questions. **Werner Wobbe***, Policy Officer, DG Research, European Commission, Brussels, found it very scaring.

– Is the fading out jobs in the middle part of U-shape curve a country trend or a European trend, he questioned.

He emphasised the differences in labour market structures and cultures in the EU and between various countries. In the UK there is a pronounced trend which may support the U-shape, while Sweden and the Germanic countries show another pattern with more upgrading of middle part of the curve.

– What’s your opinion based on Eurofound’s observatory and data, Werner Wobbe asked.

Some in the audiences asked for more and better evidence. **Robert Taylor**, former Labour Editor, Financial Times, said:

– It is too much talk, not enough evidence.

He emphasised the increasing inequality on the European labour market, the weakening of trade unions and collective bargaining. These trends are related to the de-industrialisation in Europe and losses of jobs in manufacturing where the trade unions used to be powerful. High tech companies in the private sector have failed to generate new jobs.

– The future in the private sector looks grim to me. At the same time the squeeze on the public sector will be substantial, Robert Taylor emphasised, and referred to the financial crises:

– Every country has spent an enormous sum of money, taxpayer’s money, in trying to save banks from total collapses. However, in a near future those debts have to be repaid which will put the public sector under big pressure. Under these circumstances it will be extremely difficult to increase public employment.

– Where is the engine for net growth of employment going to come in Europe, Robert Taylor asked and said finally:

– I suspect that if we don’t address current problems with realistic answers, we are not going to get better in 2020.



“Low qualified jobs or low skilled job can also be good jobs. They should be very good jobs...”

Frank Pot, Professor, Nijmegen, Nijmegen School of Management.



“Where is the engine for net growth of employment going to come in Europe?”

Robert Taylor, former Labour Editor, Financial Times.

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Have to work longer

Donald Storrie explained the data supporting the U-shape curve. The United States and the UK have good data and show a very clear trend. The Eurofound had made analysis on somewhat less good data for the European Union, and it shows also a U-shape, but with a little more upgrading. The Scandinavian countries have more of upgrading and perhaps also some growth in the middle, while the Netherlands and France have a very strong polarisation.

– There is quite a lot of heterogeneity between Member States and it's not an overall trend everywhere, he explained.

Prolonging working life raised several questions. Jan Andersson underlined that not many employees in heavy work, for instance construction workers, are able to stay until they are 65 years of age.

A bigger problem is that people are working fewer years than before. Their entrance to the labour market occurs, in average later, about 20-25 years of age, and their retirement occurs earlier, in fact, in average around 60 years of age. To be able to work longer the working conditions in general have to be improved.

–You have to work with safety at work, improve people's involvement and education, Jan Andersson said, but he also demanded incentives on individual level:

– If I don't get anything out of working to 68, I will not do it. Most of us will not do it. You also need to have some extra incentives.

Robert Strauss responded to Jan Andersson's concern:

– They have surely not to do heavy manual labour beyond the age of 60, or maybe already 55, but they don't have to leave the work force. We are all going to do other jobs. There are administrative jobs. The building worker can, for instance, teach younger men and women how to lay bricks. They can do education.

The internal migration on the European labour market has been intensified during the last five to six years. Many persons from the former Eastern European countries have moved to more and better paid jobs in the western part of the European Union. During the recession the migration westwards has slowed down or forced people to return from the UK and Ireland to Poland and the Baltic countries.

Robert Strauss pointed out that policymakers have to take the migration in account and ensure that people keep their pension rights and social rights:

–That's an important part of making a Europe for citizens, and an efficient and to achieve effective labour market.

How to sell EU 2020?

Robert Strauss explained that the Lisbon Strategy is a European level paper and therefore the text has to be very comprehensive. Every Member State wants their specific formulations and the EU policymakers have to make sure that everybody can agree on the text:

–Therefore you get a sort of complex wording. If I was giving advice how to sell the strategy I would suggest a short, snappy slogan such as "More and better jobs". Everybody can understand that.

Jan Andersson proposed another slogan "The best part in the world to work and live".

– It's linked to everything!



"If I don't get anything out of working to 68, I will not do it. You also need to have some extra incentives."

Jan Andersson, former Member of the European Parliament, Helsingborg.

Jobs at any costs in times of economic crises?

Will the balance between social and economic sustainable work systems change when the economic recessions ends?

On the Swedish labour market, the social partners have the responsibility for collective agreements while the government and the state have responsibility for labour market policies and for promotion of the transition from one job to another. The Swedish trade unions have also a positive attitude to structural changes, new technology, increased productivity and competitiveness.

People first!

For a long period of time there has been a growing interest for the Swedish model which managed to combine economic growth, high employment rates and social welfare.

– During the financial crises, the Swedish model has showed that it is not so robust any longer, said **Wanja Lundby-Wedin**, President of the ETUC, and President of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, Stockholm, and she made a comment on one heading in the conference programme “Jobs at any cost...”:

– The answer is no. The trade union can never accept that the burden of the economic crises is laid on the shoulders of working people.

Wanja Lundby-Wedin pointed out that the crises maybe are not over yet and that it is too early to relax. The major problems are still ahead:

– One problem is the high level of long-term unemployment both in Sweden and in other countries in Europe. Therefore, there is need to pursue an effective labour market policy in order to limit the number of people effected by unemployment. There is no reason why Sweden has such a high unemployment and why the youth unemployment is among the highest in Europe.

Lack of political willingness

In the current crises, she underlined that the Member States have to take advantage of the Stability and Growth Pact in order to limit the effects of the recession. Therefore, the EU leadership, not least through the Swedish EU presidency, has to allow the Member States to use their available financial resources to combat the crises.

The end of the present Lisbon strategy period is close. Wanja Lundby-Wedin referred to a mid-term review meeting where two quite different perspectives emerged. One was focused on “first growth, then something to the people”, while the other argued for “social cohesion creates growth by itself”.

– Since the strategy was launched, the focus has radically shifted to overall quantitative goals, such as high economic growth and job creation, while job quality and social issues have been considered as natural consequences of growth and therefore, they have not been expressed as specific goals, she explained, and summarized her view of the outcome of the strategy:

– It has failed to deliver according to the goals. The number of jobs and



“This is really important if we want to take a step further to a more social Europe.”

Wanja Lundby-Wedin, President of the ETUC, and President of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, Stockholm.

their quality are not satisfactory. Inequalities, poverty and social exclusion have increased. The economic growth has not been big enough to provide sustainable development.

She was not blaming the strategy as such, but pointed to the lack of political willingness:

– It has not been there, not to the same extent as it was when the strategy was launched.

According to work programme for 2009 and 2010, the European social partners have agreed on a joint recommendation as a contribution to the next strategy up to 2020.

– We are talking about a new social deal for working people, Wanja Lundby-Wedin said. The next strategy has also to address short term issues, such as sustainable social security system and the quality of public services, not only medium-term and long-term challenges.

The ETUC has three main topics on the top of the agenda; firstly the development of an inclusive, sustainable and green economy, secondly the quality of macro economic policy, and thirdly the quality of jobs.

– Europe has to achieve full employment on a safe and secure labour market. We firmly reject a policy approach where workers are put under pressure to become more flexible. In turn it will imply a risk for wider income gaps, more atypical jobs, less coverage of the social system, she feared.

Wanja Lundby-Wedin emphasised the need of spending more resources on education, not only education at universities, but on all levels. Moreover she asked for an increased political interest in apprenticeship that would make it easier for young people to enter the labour market. She also expressed concern about the danger of long-term and structural unemployment:

– Workers with the lowest qualifications and workers with a weak foothold on the labour market are the most vulnerable. Precarious job and downward pressure on wages are not the way we want to address global competition and the emerging low-wage economies.

Green job programme needed

More green jobs and greener jobs are on ETUC's agenda. Wanja Lundby-Wedin pointed out that all jobs have to be greener, but she also mentioned an anxiety among trade unionist, in particular in the manufacturing sector, about the strengthened environmental demands:

– In manufacturing, the trade unions are very worried about climate change policies, but it is important that the industry has a programme on how to get a job greener, on how to combat climate change and on how to create more, greener, better and sustainable jobs for the future.

There is also a trade union demand for a stronger social policy agenda to maintain people on the labour market with a robust income, high level of social protection and full respect for workers' rights. Wanja Lundby-Wedin stressed that a focus on the welfare system in general is needed, but also on specific issues such as unemployment benefits:

– In many countries unemployed people don't receive any income support. Sometimes the unemployment benefits are poorly targeted and the system is not targeted towards those who really need social support. Moreover, unemployment benefits on a decent level are an extremely important tool against social dumping.

On the agenda is also the importance of stronger rights to combat the trend of increasing inequality, and Wanja Lundby-Wedin referred to a social protocol

proposed by the ETUC. The *Social Progress Protocol* is linked to the Lisbon Treaty and will give priority to social rights and collective actions. There is also work going on towards stronger directives about equal treatment of all workers, equal pay for the same job in the same country.

– This is really important if we want to take a step further to a more social Europe, she declared and added some comments on the Lisbon Strategy of today:

– There has been a lack of participation by the social partners both at European level, but especially on national, regional and local levels as well.

Demand for research-based knowledge

In 2006, the government decided to close the Swedish Institute for Working Life. During more than a decade there has been established a close collaboration between researchers, trade unionists and employers representatives. The government's opinion was that work life research should be performed at universities, not at a specific research institute.

When trade union people now want to find research-based knowledge about working life, they have to rely on personal contacts at the universities.

– We need some kind of central body that can provide an overall picture of current research, previous experience and future research areas of working life. We need also coordination of statistics, analyses and development, Wanja Lundby-Wedin emphasised.

Business strategies, labour and employment – a crises perspective

Companies want continuity and to be in business tomorrow. The longer the crises last, the higher is the risk of losses and closure. Companies need also to make profit. For some years a company can be unprofitable, but in the long run it may not manage to survive.

Companies are expected to manage risk. **Gijsbert van Liemt**, Senior Economist, Stockholm, identified four kinds of risks. Firstly, fluctuations of exchange rate, for instance when the Swedish crown compared to the US dollar went up by 50 per cent in eight months in 2008. Secondly, primary commodity prices where it has been dramatic decrease of oil prices.

– It gives an idea of what it means to operate in an international environment, he said, and explored the other challenges. There have been tremendous fluctuations in demands and within some sector a decline by 70 to 80 per cent.

– A company will never manage to cope with this unless the recovery comes quickly.

Companies also need to keep their inventory low. One strategy is just-in-time deliveries and to reduce the working capital. Another one is to an increasingly extent pass the risks to subcontractors. In general, most companies are a part of a value chain, for instance concentrated on manufacturing, marketing or selling. They constitute conglomerates of firms that have many advantages and disadvantages, but one advantage is that a company can pass some risks to other companies or share them on the market place.

Companies do want their employees to be flexible. There is a trend towards one core group of committed, high-skilled workers, who have great functional and working time flexibility, and another group of non-core workers to be used

when it is necessary. It is sometimes argued that the society is heading towards a dual workforce. There are, however, other flexibility policies, for instance increased involvement or decrease of subcontractors.

China – an opportunity or a threat?

The globalisation means an even greater international interdependence with increasing integration of production, enhancing trade and strengthening financial competition. Another dimension is a declining importance of Western Europe and North America in the world economy. The process started already in the 1960's with the emerging Japanese economy, then the oil-exporting countries came and thereafter the new emerging economies.

– Today there is no way of avoiding China, Gijbert van Liemt said, and raised the question if China should be seen as an opportunity or a threat:

– Jobs have been relocated to China, but during 30 years of growth China has become a superpower of its own right.

According to some accounts China is the second most important economy in the world. Many Chinese people still make very little money, but the emerging demand is enormous.

– Yes, China is threat, but it is also a fantastic opportunity, he concluded.

It has frequently been discussed if the reason behind the financial crisis whether the US government deregulated too much, or it was the fault of the opportunistic financial institutions that took advantage of the deregulation. In fact, many banks started to lend money to people who could not really afford to have a loan and a house. Until 2008 only very few experts knew about the fragile financial situation, when it suddenly appeared that huge companies in the US and Europe had a lot of “toxic assets” on their balance sheets. It caused an acute crisis due to the lack of confidence in the banking system, and the banks stopped dealing with each other. The financial crises spilled over into an economic crisis, because the banks more or less stopped lending to the productive economy and caused “the credit crunch”. Then the economic crisis spilled over to an employment crisis due to a dramatic decline in the world wide demand and if there is no social security net, the employment crisis risks becoming a social crisis.

Governments have spent enormous resources to avoid that the financial crises is turning into a social crisis. Political initiatives have been taken to support financial institutions in trouble and to help them to survive. The banks got most of the government money.

Governments have also taken certain initiatives to increase the demand in key sectors, such as the automotive industry and construction industry. To speed up the turn over of the car market some countries have launched a “cash for clunkers” programme and the construction sector has been promoted by tax credits or temporary tax reductions. At least 21 OECD countries have introduced short term working schemes, job subsidies, public sector work creation schemes and increased the capacity of the unemployment services. Moreover, measures used on more individual level support are, for instance improved unemployment benefits, training allowance and housing support.

– All governments have tried to intervene in the economy to avoid that the financial crisis becomes a social crises, even those governments that traditionally have opted to a hands-off approach, Gijbert van Liemt emphasised.

“All governments have tried to intervene in the economy to avoid that the financial crisis becomes a social crisis, even those governments that traditionally have opted to a hands off approach.”

Gijbert van Liemt, Senior Economist, Stockholm.

What type of recovery will come?

The crises has forced governments and international institutions to cooperate, which is almost unavoidable considering how integrated the world economy is today. It is also because of lessons learnt during the serious crises in the 1930's.

– We have seen a lot of cooperation in the G 20 and in the Europe Union, Gijsbert van Liemt said and added:

– The focus has largely been on people in a job or people about to loose it. New recruitment has suffered enormously. When there is structural overcapacity as in the European automobile industry, financial aid to the companies is the best temporary thing compared to all the assistant schemes trying to keep people in job.

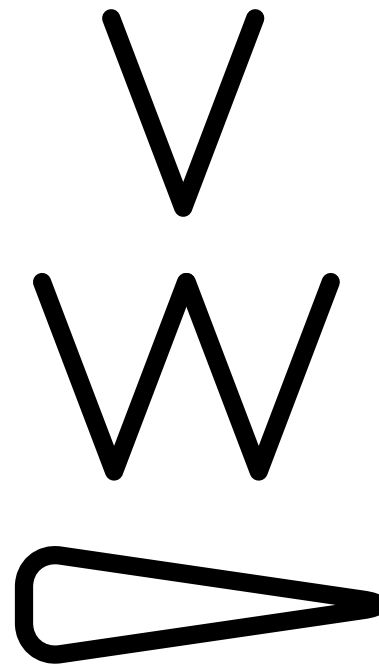
A recovery will come, but the question is how it will look like. Everybody wants a V-type recovery which implies that the economy will recover as quickly as it turned down. An alternative is a W-shape or a double-dip recovery which means a temporary upswing and rather soon a new downturn and then another upswing.

– The nightmare scenario is a carrot-shaped recovery. It has happened in Japan after the recession in the 1980's. They tried to solve the crisis but the economy has never recovered. The slow growth is mainly due to help from the government, Gijsbert van Liemt explained.

To combat global crises super-national cooperation is needed. The EU countries have worked together very well. China has been a stabilizing factor and during 2009 it is estimated to eight per cent. The commodity prices have been stable. The legitimacy of the governments has improved, but the question is how their standings will be after the recovery. However, the confidence in the banking system has declined dramatically and it is obvious that there is a need for regulations.

– We will see a fragile recovery and the recruitment will be fragile as well. Many companies have just-in-time production and they have now a much squeezed workforce. Since there is so little “fat” in the organisation, there is a need for more people when the recovery comes, Gisjbert van Liemt concluded, but emphasised:

– But youth unemployment will still be a problem. They will perhaps become the main victims of the crises.



“But the youth unemployment will still be a problem. They will perhaps become the main victims of the crises.”

Gijsbert van Liemt, Senior Economist, Stockholm.

What constitutes a social sustainable work system?



“Usually reflection is something that you do not do at work. You are at work to work, not to reflect.”

Peter Docherty, Professor,
Chalmers University of Technology,
Gothenburg.

Researchers know rather well what a good job is, but they have not managed to convince employers that good jobs probably also are profitable. Many new ways of organisation have worked well, but too often there has been a lack of resilience. In the wake of the current economic crises, many employers have chosen to go back to older modes of production and of work organisation.

After an introduction about characteristics of a social sustainable work system, four workshops discussed issues such as an attractive workplace, the stability of the three pillars of the present Lisbon Strategy, organising sustainable work system, and the workplace of the future.

What should be sustained in people at work?

The Swedish *Saltsa project* about sustainable work started in 1999 and eleven EU countries were involved. It was incredibly difficult to get the management science researchers to understand and agree on same concept as the sociologists. Therefore, a lot of conceptual work had to be done.

– Now it has come a bit further based on case-studies from all over the world, **Peter Docherty**, Professor, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, said and described the first steps to define the concept of sustainable work.

Sustainability is in part a contestable subject since there is no authoritative, universally valid definition. Various definitions are addressing various aspects. The temporal aspect was introduced by the Brundtland Commission focusing on “from tomorrow” to “coming generations”.

– You can’t plan for future generations. Look at Sweden, the politicians have a four year mandate period. Unfortunately, the EU planning seems to apply a very long term perspective, Peter Docherty emphasised.

Another perspective concerns the inclusion aspect, for instance on local, regional or global levels. It could include employees, groups, organisations, systems or stakeholders.

– This is what I am going to talk about; sustainable work systems in sustaining workers and not about unemployment, Peter Docherty said, and referred to an ILO report on promotion of sustainable enterprises.

– It’s the only report I am aware of that deals with organisations, groups of people and their working conditions.

Peter Docherty elaborated also the domain aspect and he quoted John Elkington’s Triple Bottom-Line underlining the social, economic and environmental domains:

“At the heart of the emerging sustainable value creation concept, is the recognition that for a company to prosper over the long term it must continuously meet society’s need for goods and service without destroying natural and social capital.”

– In general it’s very difficult for companies to juggle with all these domains. Usually they can only handle one or two. Today sustainability is often

regarded solely as environmental and economic issues. In the EU, it's basically about the Carbon footprints and the social issues are forgotten, he said.

The balance between the domains must be attained and maintained. Peter Docherty had some examples from the Swedish health care sector:

– One example of the relationship between social and economic domains is the division in primary care, hospital care and after-care. All of them are separate legal as well as financial organisations dealing with the care value chain.

He raised some socially important questions:

– Who in the value chain is going to take the responsibility of taking care of a person in a sustainable system? Which healthcare strategy should we adopt?

Static and dynamic sustainability

Two other important aspects are static and dynamic sustainability. Dynamic sustainability implies that the goals are to promote continual growth and regeneration of ecological, economic, human and social resources. The step from good work to sustainable work concerns how the jobs are designed.

Jobs are designed to satisfy needs and adjust values of certain clearly defined variables. Moreover, jobs are designed to be filled by employees.

– People need to understand, manage and to find meaning in the job. This leads to a sense of cohesion at work. The work is seen as meaningful and worth to do, Peter Docherty explained.

Some research has been about employees who never were ill. The findings show that pleasure, satisfaction and motivation were in focus.

– What needs to be sustained in people at work, asked Peter Docherty and followed up by emphasising that sustainability is the same as developing people's resources.

Sustainable work entails that work is crafted to fit the worker's capabilities and interest rather than fitting workers to the job. Moreover, the workers will focus on the use and growth of their resources and potentials. The work should allow individuality and community. Finally, the work should also promote thinking, reflecting, feeling and acting.

– Usually reflection is something that you do not do at work. You are at work to work, not to reflect, he said.

The level of participation is another cornerstone impacting on the development towards sustainable work. Usually the managers have seen their task as being sense-giving while the workers have been seen as sense-taking. Extremely important is to provide a mutual process of sense-making between employers and workers. Learning mechanisms, cognitive, procedural as well as structural, are necessary. The growth of the individual and the growth of the community have to occur at the same time.

Growth of sustainability is non-linear and it occurs often from unexpected experiences. Therefore, the development of sustainability is rather unpredictable. Sustainable employees should be given discretion for self-organisation and opportunities to develop new and emerging solutions. Accordingly, current work practices should regularly be re-assessed to avoid stagnation.

Four challenging questions

The evidence-based development towards sustainable work has shown some common characteristics. The first step is about awareness, recognition and insights. It is almost always initiated on the top level management and the

circumstances are often dramatic. It also concerns the formulation of basic values.

The second step is focused on mobilizing, building commitment and setting directions. The essential issues are creation of learning arenas and spaces for collaboration and dialogue. Thereafter, it is time for design, experimentation and implementation of specific change mechanisms and processes. This path towards sustainable work implies trials-and-errors and requires new questions and new answers.

The fourth and final step is about the continuous work for sustainability which demands on-going monitoring, emerging organisation and trustful relationships.

On the way towards more sustainable work systems Peter Docherty identified four challenging issues and questions:

- How can a holistic approach to sustainability be developed in organisations?
- What needs to be sustained in people at work?
- How can sustainable work and work organisation be realized through design and development?
- How can present organisations or systems be developed to be more sustainable, for example, by developing new strategic relations with current and even new actors and stakeholders?

Workshop 1. Competitive, attractive workplaces

Can a sustainable work system address both short-term and long-term perspectives?

“Don't forget that improving efficiency by better work organisation also needs workers' cooperation.”

Bernard Housset, Independent Expert of industrial relations, European Club of Human Resources, Brussels.

A study on attractive workplaces, carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, has tried to translate the Lisbon Strategy down to the company level. **Bernard Housset**, Independent Expert of industrial relations, European Club of Human Resources, Brussels, meant that the strategy was not understandable at company level.

The researchers were focused on six areas, namely improving competence and fostering employability, increasing labour market participation of underemployed groups, integrating people at risk of exclusion, making work economically attractive, and promoting entrepreneurship and business creation. One hundred cases from seven countries were studied to see how these areas were implemented.

In the successful cases, the determinant factors was the company's will to change, and the active participation of the employees. Bernhard Housset also stressed the importance of sustainable human resource policies at company levels to improve the quality of work and employment. Moreover, he emphasised that companies capable to keep key measures, for instance improving skills at all levels, will later have a competitive advantage and added:

– Don't forget that improving efficiency by better work organisation also needs workers' cooperation.

Four indicators proposed

The 4th European Working Conditions Survey, carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, has shown that almost four out of ten employees were found in discretionary

learning forms and every fourth worker in lean production. Two out of ten worked in Tayloristic systems and every sixth in traditional and simple structures of work organisation.

The discretionary forms dominated in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, while the lean production could be found in the Baltic countries, Poland, the UK and Ireland. Tayloristic forms were mainly seen in East European countries, but also in Spain, Greece and Cyprus. Countries like Germany, France, Austria, Belgium, Italy and Hungary had more diversity, but also on average more discretionary learning organisations.

The different work organisation forms were also looked at from a human resource policy perspective. Looking at physical risks the exposure in general were lower in discretionally and traditions forms, while exposure to chemical risks was higher in lean production. Ergonomic risks were more common in Tayloristic organisations.

Long working hours were more often found in discretionally learning and lean production, and non-standard hours in lean production and Tayloristic forms. Health and safety risks and high work intensity were more reported in lean production and Tayloristic organisations, while work-life balance were better in discretionally learning and in simple organisations.

– The discretionally learning form scores better on nearly all indicators of quality of working life, **Greet Vermeylen**, Research Manager, Eurofound, concluded and proposed four simple indicators for measuring progress, namely learning new things at the job, employee involvement in problem solving, a composite indicator on autonomy, and the number of people working in autonomous teams.

Mats Essemyr, Research Officer, The Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees (TCO), summarised the discussion.

Many European companies still rely on traditional Taylorism, but the establishment of learning organisations as a form of work system has developed. However, the pattern is rather scattered. Learning organisations can be found in different kinds of industries and production.

Human resource policies for sustainable work exist, but top management has had to embrace them as an important tool for higher productivity. Key indicators of human resource policy are not always included among those tools that management uses to run a company. The current crisis has caused a backlash in the development of more attractive workplaces. Some companies are moving back to Tayloristic systems of production.

Today there is no EU policy about work organisation. In 1996, a Green Paper on work organisation was launched, but it was never follow up by a White Paper. Many employers saw probably a European directive on work organisation as a threat. Today nobody wants a directive, but the issue of work organisation can be brought back on the policy agenda. The Open Method of Coordination and the EU Social Dialogue can be used as tools for development of work organisation policies. Consequently, there are opportunities and tools for new initiatives as an input to the Post-Lisbon Strategy.

Workshop 2. The three pillars of the Lisbon agenda – are they stable enough?

How does the vision of a sustainable work system based on high levels of social inclusion relate to the convergence between productivity and quality of working life in the workplace?

In a research project funded by the Swedish ESF-council **Lena Abrahamsson**, Professor, University of Technology, Luleå, has looked at a number of ESF project and their way of organising work in the present economic crises. She found a number of conflicting demands for both production and for a sustainable work organisation, in particular how to balance between different demands.

Objectives of flattening the work organisation can be in opposition to internal forces promoting centralisation. It is also difficult to simultaneously meet demands on flexibility and standardisation. The implementation of new work organisations raises questions on how to balance on one hand a holistic view, job enlargement, job rotation etc., and on the other hand, lean production, assembly lines, inter-changeability and de-qualification.

In a work organisation there can also appear a clash of interest between innovation and production. Another challenge is how to combine lean production with workplace learning as well as good working conditions. The employees' demand of freedom, such as autonomous work, is not always easy to balance with the employers' need of control.

The workplace culture can provide resource for learning opportunities, but can also be seen as an obstacle. Many workplaces are implementing and promoting team work, but at the same time many employers want to have individual wage schemes which may cause disagreements within a team. Furthermore, there is a subtle boarder between empowerment of the employees and manipulation of the work force.

It is a difficult challenge to combine workplace learning and organisational learning with individual learning, such as skills development. There are also problems of balancing between job security and employability.

Men are favoured when it comes to workplace learning and efforts aimed to improve employability, especially in times of economic crisis.

– A stereotype and unequal gender order is embedded in many organisations. It tends to be restored and continue to live. It may create obstacles for the individual as well as the company, Lena Abrahamsson emphasised, and proposed how to face the challenges of competing demands:

– A good dialogue at the workplace is very important. Problem can be solved through providing opportunities to sit down and discuss during the process, but it places demands on production and organization design. There is also a need for research on human work science with a multidisciplinary approach, which also includes engineering and technology.

Union provides training for companies

In a project funded by the Swedish ESF Council, a regional metalworker union had helped SMEs with education and training of their employees instead of layoffs. The metalworkers in the region have to improve their competence in order to avoid unemployment, and to be prepared when the economic upswing will come. The metalworkers' union has organised the training and has taken all the financial risks during the project.

“A stereotype and unequal gender order is embedded in many organisations. It tends to be restored and continue to live.”

Lena Abrahamsson, Professor,
University of Technology, Luleå.

Employers and employees were interviewed about their training needs. They gave priority to four areas; computer training, driving licences of trucks and lorries, lean production and industrial production. So far, 540 out of 1 000 workers have passed more than one course.

An external evaluation has proven that the training has strengthened the individuals and that the companies claim to stand stronger on the market. About 70 per cent of the companies said that the training has increased their efficiency. The project included also discussions about gender-sensitivity.

– The project could be seen as a model of short-term as well as long-term continuous competence development, **Mikael Stenberg**, Project Leader, IF Metall, Sundsvall, concluded.

During the workshop discussion several proposals came up. Lean organisation was proposed to be redefined as Lean+ production to include and integrate learning organisation and “the good work”.

Conflicting demands on the modern work organisation can be solved. The timing of reorganisation is crucial. It is important to choose the right opportunity to change, for instance when new technology is implemented. The employees need to see that reorganisation is necessary.

Evidence was also provided of the need for Structural and Social funds to promote funding both for larger national projects, run by the ESF Councils, and smaller project on regional level, such as education vouchers.

Mikael Stenberg was asked, whether there was any discussion about change of work organisation during the project. He replied that some companies have discovered the need of change as a result of the training. Another question was whether all obstacles identified by the researchers were experienced as barriers to the implementation of work organisation. The answer was no. The summary of the conflicting demands should rather be seen as a guidebook of problems.

Workshop 3. Managing and organising for a sustainable work system

Can European management models for skills, competence and value creation support a sustainable work system?

A sustainable work system should not only preserve and maintain human resource (HR), but also support the development of these resources. Human resources are more than skills development through formal education and training. The organisation has to be developed in such a way that learning will become an integrated part of work. Moreover, it is important that learning, performed at a workplace and the knowledge created during the process, is also used in the development of the company as a whole. Some workplaces have good learning possibilities on an individual level, but it is seldom used as a resource for the organisation of work.

It has been argued that organisational theorists have to renew the broader social structures and bring “society” back to the centre stage.

– We can not rely on 30-50 years old theories, because the working life has changed so much, **Annika Härenstam**, Professor, University of Gothenburg, emphasised, and added that is important to explore many phenomena simultaneously, such as technical and organisational factors as well as social forces. Furthermore, research is needed on how these factors are linked to each other in order to develop knowledge about how organisations should be

“We cannot rely on 30 to 50 years old theories because the working life has changed so much.”

Annika Härenstam, Professor,
University of Gothenburg.

designed and managed to support sustainability in working life.

-Many disciplines need to cooperate in order to generate theories, concepts and models for organisation of work that supports work systems at societal levels as well as workplace level, she concluded.

Sustainable work implies very much interconnection between different levels. Societal and individual levels are very much connected. A competitive economy has to be collaborative. It is not enough to be competitive.

Studies made by **Edward Lorenz**, Professor, University of Nice-CNRS, show a link between formal work organisation, learning innovation capacity and quality of learning. There is a need for a new perspective on learning organisations. More focus has to be addressed to the processes or how the learning is carried out, and how the conditions for learning are created in individual learning as well as organisational learning. In the future, the focus has to change from learning organisations to organisational learning processes.

Sustainable organisation should not only preserve or maintain the resources it utilises, such as economic, environmental, human and social resources, but it should also actively support their development. **Mari Kira**, Academy Research Fellow, Helsinki University of Technology, is focusing her research on employees' sustainable work ability or their long term adaptive and proactive ability to work. She has compared workplaces in Finland, Germany and Sweden about learning opportunities and the employees' possibilities to develop their own resources. The study shows an unbalanced picture, since certain types of work-based learning are possible in contemporary European work, but there are also clear boundaries for other types of development.

From research to action

Some demands for future research were expressed during the discussion. The audience asked for more comparative analyses, for instance about the impact of different work organisations on performance, capacity and quality of working life. More knowledge about the implementation process is also needed.

There is no general European way of organising and managing work. Instead the methods in the EU countries and regions are very different. There is probably no "best solutions", since more knowledge is needed about the processes of creating organisations in local settings.

There is also a demand of more information about national programmes to improve benchmarking opportunities and by that contribute to policy learning across Europe. One crucial question is about knowledge dissemination and how to go from research to action. Moreover, how to make companies interested in research about sustainable work organisations?

Edward Lorenz commented by referring to the *MEADOW* project. More and better data are needed to design policies for sustainable work organisation. In particular, linked employer-employee data sets would allow for analyses of what impact company strategies and management policies have on workers, including quality of work.

-The project is developing guidelines for undertaking a harmonised linked employer-employee survey of organisational change and its impact, he explained and added:

-During December 2009 the first full-scale test of the employer survey will be carried out in Sweden by the Statistics Sweden.

Another question was raised about whether there is a gap between the realities of the more dynamic policy and the reality of workplaces. Measures are needed that can contribute to monitoring and benchmarking in the context of

the *European Employment Strategy* (EES) instead of the existing labour market indicators, which provide very little information about what people do at work and the quality of their jobs. The kind of data that the *MEADOW* programme will produce, could allow the integration of the concept of work organisation into the EU policy framework via the Open Method of Coordination (OCM).

Furthermore there was a discussion about national and corporate cultures and whether these differences have an impact on how work is organised in Europe. There are big disparities between countries in culture, traditions and institutions and significant differences in the approaches to work organisation as well as to practices. General objectives and benchmarks have to be set up on European level, which can be achieved by the OCM, but the local regions must have the opportunity to choose how to realize them. The EU can not tell all companies and institutions in Europe how they should organise their work.

Workshop 4. The workplace of the future

Can a sustainable work system address both static effectiveness, such as productivity and quality issues as well as dynamic effectiveness, such as learning, improvement and innovation issues?

There is gap between current policy trends stressing new and high skilled jobs and the empirical evidence of what happens in real working life. The policies are mainly addressing the introduction of new and high skilled job, the so-called weightless jobs, but the depth, the pattern and the significance of this change are with few exceptions in reality overstated. In UK no empirical evidence proves that low level jobs to an increasingly extent will disappear. Instead the working conditions are getting worse.

– It shows another picture than the political one addressing high skilled qualified jobs, **Peter Nolan**, Professor, University of Leeds, pointed out, who was the coordinator of the major study *ESCR Future of work*, and he added:

– There is no single answer how to solve it.

One of his major points concerned the disappearance of manual manufacturing jobs. These work tasks are declining, but there is a shift to service manual jobs. In the UK, they are increasing and the jobs do not stand for jobs with higher education and classification. Instead, the working conditions are getting worse and the working time is increasing.

–For instance in the US, you can find a lot of negative trends in job quality and a shortage of good jobs, Peter Nolan concluded.

Robert Taylor, former Labour Editor, Financial Times, emphasised that the current management message “work harder and work smarter” is focused on increasing efficiency and more work contribution by the employees. He also raised one important impact of globalisation:

– International ownership of corporations may imply conflicts between the international culture of the new enterprise and the local corporate culture.

Denmark best for the elderly

In Denmark, flexicurity is a part of the collective bargaining agreement system and it is not an initiative taken by the government. It is more frequently used in low-skilled and low-paid jobs than in high-skilled and well-paid professions.

Trine Pernille Larsen, Researcher, FAOS, Copenhagen, has carried out

a study, in which she has compared countries with more advanced social protection system with countries with less developed welfare system. A big challenge is to keep the balance between the working life demands and the family life, for instance child care and parental leave when their children are ill. Moreover, many adults have to take care of their own ageing parents or other older relatives. The latter is an increasing problem since the population in average is getting older and older.

Trine Pernille Larsen has looked at families' various adaptation models, such as working hours and temporary contracts. She has also investigated different solutions; formal solutions public as well as private, and informal solutions such as private nannies or nurses. The study shows that the work-life balance has a strong impact on labour mobilisation and productivity.

– How do we find a solution? An ageing population and falling birth rates are highlighting the need for further research, she pointed out, and added another finding:

– Denmark was the best country in taking care of the elderly.

In the discussion there was asked for more research in fields such as the polarisation of the job structure, the gap between policy ideals and solid empirical evidence. Too much research efforts have been spent on precarious job and there has been too little focus on post-modern job degradation. It was also emphasised that better jobs are not always the same as high-skill jobs.

Another proposed research areas were the de-collectivisation of the work force and the growing unemployment cultures. Furthermore in the current workforce there is a trend of increasing number of managers and simultaneously a declining number of workers.

No more proof needed

In the general discussion after the four workshops, **Åke Zettermark**, Labour Market Expert, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations, Stockholm, pointed out that the wage disparity is increasing in many the EU countries, and he asked whether a more equal wage distribution is a precondition for the new sustainable work system:

– Is there a risk that the wage disparity is destroying the sustainable work system.

Peter Nolan pointed out that the inequality of wages and the polarisation of jobs can work as obstacles to achieve sustainable workplaces:

– If only low-paid workforce is available, it can be a disincentive to companies to upgrade the work practise.

Most of presentations and discussions were focused on the need for more research and more proof for sustainable work system.

– We do not need more proof for the new workplace development and what it means for the good work, **Steven Dhondt**, Senior Researcher, TNO Quality of life, Tilburg, argued and added:

– The knowledge has been there for the last 30-40 years. There is a need of data and of what companies and employees are doing, but there is no need for more proof. We have to focus on another agenda.

Companies now tend to fall back to their old modes of production and employers think that lean production is a new system while it just can be seen as a complicated form of Taylorism. Steven Dhondt emphasised that researchers need more self-esteem and that they should be more proud and outspoken in their support of learning organisations:

– Learning workplaces are a real good model and we have to clarify it to the

“We do not need more proof for the new workplace development and what it means for the good work.”

Steven Dhondt, Professor, TNO Quality of Life, Tilburg.

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outside world, he said and went on to his next point on the agenda:

–We have to work more on ways to disseminate the knowledge. Now we are too much focused on research and on our inner circle.

A third problem is to find resilient models which are stable over time.

– It was quite astonishing to hear the Swedish trade unions' experience that companies do not have resilient models and have gone back to Taylorism, Steven Dhondt concluded, and brought some ideas forward as an input to the post-Lisbon process:

– We don't need to know more about the workplace. We know what a good workplace is, but we need to know how it can become more resilient and live over time. Taylorism is just a bad habit. We have to work with the managers to leave this model and work with the learning model.

Pär Larsson, Programme Manager, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, Stockholm, agreed that researchers have a lot of answers on the what-questions, but not to the same extent on the how-questions.

– How does the process of change work? There we have a lack of knowledge. We need more research on the implementation and change process, Pär Larsson concluded.

“How does the process of change work? We need more research on the implementation and change process.”

Pär Larsson, Programme Manager, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, Stockholm.

Post-Lisbon vision – panel discussion about challenges

“We have to learn from superior workplaces and allow the transfer of knowledge to others in Europe.”

Werner Wobbe, policy officer, DG Research, Brussels.

Can the vision of sustainable works systems be translated into guidelines, which encourage Member States to adopt particular measures in support of new forms of work organisation characterised by convergence between productivity and quality of working life? What targets and indicators can be identified?

How can the European Commission deploy its own resources (such as the Structural Funds) more effectively to encouraging enterprises to adopt new forms of work organisation?

Particularly how to benchmark new sustainable forms of work organisation and their contribution to a post-recession European labour market?

Which type of research is needed for the development and implementation of the Post-Lisbon vision?

The Lisbon Agenda has four major lines, but in general all are focused on economic growth and jobs. The issue of work organisation did not really enter the process. **Werner Wobbe**, Policy Officer, DG Research, pointed out that the understanding of new forms of work organisation differs between the EU countries. Among researchers and experts these new forms are seen as means to raise productivity, superior to the old Tayloristic models and to improve the quality of work.

– Unfortunately, it is only in the Nordic countries and Germany this approach is seen as superior to the old one. In the UK and the other Anglo-Saxon countries, they are talking about “to have a hand” and that’s often “a cheap hand”. The workers can be sourced among migrants and then exchanged at lower cost, Werner Wobbe said, and continued:

– The southern European countries have the old “patrone” culture and the employers don’t like that anyone intermingles with their decisions. The Eastern European countries have not yet a tradition about different organisations of work.

Werner Wobbe thought that the focus has to be more on the organisation of work as a tool to achieve higher productivity and higher competitiveness:

– It’s the “collaborative character of work” that we are talking about.

To improve the understanding of sustainable work system, the wording has to be right and to emphasise that the new organisation of work allows productivity gains, allows the company to become better than others and to become more competitive in a global context.

– You have to learn from superior workplaces and allow the transfer of knowledge to others in Europe, so that they can profit from these new forms of work organisation, he said and concluded:

– You have to approach the European Structural Funds, the Research

Framework Programme and the Innovation Framework Programme with the right wording. Modernising the European industry by the application of sustainable work systems could be a highly valuable input to the dialogue of the post-Lisbon vision for 2020.

Doubt about the evidence

The big challenge is how research-based knowledge will be implemented and to a great extent it is a question of how to reach people in positions and in power to decide on the change.

– Of course there is a need to further improve the knowledge about work organisation, but the results have to be presented in a way that people, who are not scientists or experts in this field, can understand why it is important, want to hear more about it and want to implement the knowledge, **Charlotte Brogren**, Director General, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, emphasised and added:

– You have to reach the top management and the Human Resource community. That's the key challenge.

Most of the discussions have been associated with high-skilled jobs, but there is still a lot of low-skilled jobs and they can also be improved and offer more well-being, learning and innovation.

– There is a need of a two-tier policy in the EU, **Frank Pot**, Professor, Nijmegen School of Management, pointed out and raised the question whether there is sufficient evidence that sustainable work will have a positive impact on productivity:

– At this meeting I dare to say that I am seriously doubt whether the evidence is sufficient. Although in other meetings I advocate that there is enough evidence, but to be honest I am not sure.

Frank Pot and a research colleague have made a review of the last five year's research about simultaneous improvement of working life and performance, for instance productivity and quality. Only 25 to 50 per cent of the interventions had an impact on quality of working life and performance as well. In the other cases there had only been an effect on either the working life or the performance or no impact on either of these. Moreover, it was very difficult to identify what factors were decisive for the effects.

– The only thing that is more or less common is when the employees are involved, the results are better. The opposite is also true. If they are not involved, it's most likely that there are no impact at all, he explained and added:

– We have to do a lot of work to clarify the correlations.

He emphasised that there is a need for more and better theoretical work. Today the research is very much relying on the job-demands-control model, modern socio-technology and sometimes on action-regulation theory.

– But it's not sure that there is a connection to learning or innovation or performance. We only assume that they are there, but we don't have the proper theories. More work is needed on strategic management and absorption models, and social capital approaches.

In 1995 the Green Paper of work organisation was published, but it did not progress into a White Paper. However, there is a lot of activities going on in this field across Europe, for instance *Innovative work design*, *Work of the future* in Germany, the *Workplace development* in Finland, the *Workplace innovation* in Ireland and the *Social invention* in Belgium and the Netherlands.

– Maybe it's time to make an update of the Green Paper on work organisation, Frank Pot proposed.



“The results have to be presented in a way that people, who are not scientists or experts, can understand why it is important.”

Charlotte Brogren, Director General, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, Stockholm.



“The only thing that is more or less common is when the employees are involved, the results are better.”

Frank Pot, Professor, Nijmegen School of Management.

Strong economic growth ahead

European industrial workers are facing the challenge of their lifetime. The creation and the maintenance of good quality jobs are vital after a long period of restructuring accentuated by the current financial crisis. However, the crisis has turned the European metalworkers' attention away from the federation's work programme, including healthy workplaces.

– Only a strong social Europe can revise the vacuum caused by the liberalisation of labour markets and increased introduction of precarious work as well economic flexibility, **Caroline Jacobsson**, Information and Communications Advisor, European Metalworkers Federation (EMF), Brussels, said and referred to EMF's manifest with five key demands which also have been introduced to the European Commission and the European Parliament. In general it is about strengthening social Europe, but also that manufacturing workers should not have to pay the prices of the economic crises. The proposed solution is an effective industrial policy that underpins sustainable development simultaneous with an energy policy responding to the need of the European society and the environment.

– The industry is still vital to Europe in order to create jobs, to boost productivity, to fuel innovation and to raise social standards. An active industrial policy will contribute to maintain and develop world class industrial activities that deliver according to social and environmental objectives, Caroline Jacobsson emphasised.

Already ten years ago the ICT industry in Europe experienced a severe competition and a transfer of jobs to India.

– A lot of manufacturing work in automotive, ship building and steel has moved to China, Japan and Korea. We can't conduct any policies without considering the effects of globalisation, Caroline Jacobsson said.

Antti Kasvio, Team Leader, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki, thought that there has been too much concern about the current crises and too little awareness about the real acuteness and scale of the challenges.

– We are probably facing decades of strong economic growth because of the huge resource mobilisation in China and elsewhere in the world. It's not unrealistic to predict that the world economy will grow with about four per cent per year, he expected.

However, the earlier growth has been entirely unsustainable from resource and environmental points of view as well from social perspectives.

Facing the Post-Lisbon Agenda the focus has to be moved from economic growth towards a more sustainable development, including the working life. Antti Kasvio put forward a warning:

– People will be alienated from European policies if they can't see that their everyday work is moving in a sustainable direction.

Involve the new Member States

Productivity is a hot issue in the new Member States in the Eastern Europe.

– We should try to involve them more in our discussions and include them in the work to be done, Frank Pot, proposed and added:

– Stressing the importance of productivity might be interesting for them. The few people I know in those countries are very much aware that productivity is not only about Taylorism, but that modern concepts of work organisation are important.

He also mentioned that the European Association of National Productivity



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Centres (EANPC) has published a memorandum on productivity which is closely related to issues such as ecology, employment and occupational health.

During a long time, there has been a debate about the relocation of blue collar workers and jobs to countries where labour cost are lower. Nowadays, it concerns all kinds of professions, even high-level jobs.

– In India they have now almost the same high-skilled level jobs as in Sweden, Charlotte Brogren said, and stated:

– The challenge for Europe with high labour costs is to compete by working smarter and creating competitive companies which also provide sustainable work for their employees.

Dissemination of knowledge vital

The knowledge is there, but it is not used and implemented. One very common excuse is lack of information or problems of dissemination. However, it is also a question about industrial structure and the stage of development. More industrialised countries with highly automated production do have some particular requirements, while countries with more agricultural pattern have other characteristics. In countries with “cheap hands” all more elaborated production models may be faded out.

– If the EU makes policies, a voluntary approach is needed, stating that we want to keep elaborated forms of production in Europe and also having the key conditions for it. Moreover, there is a need of research on the most elaborated forms, Werner Wobbe stressed.

More and extended applications of new technologies, such as biotechnology and nano-technology, are prerequisites for economic growth in the more advanced and knowledge-based countries.

– We have very little knowledge so far about the health and safety risk of these new technologies, Antti Kasvio said, and went further on to how to sell the concept of sustainability to future investors:

– You have to present how to implement a sustainable approach in the company business plan and that it will become profitable.

Better measure of productivity needed

In the EU there are huge discrepancies on issues such as productivity, health and safety and organisation of work. There is knowledge based on decades of research on work organisation and on occupational safety and health. The question is how this knowledge can be transferred to the new Member States in the Eastern part of Europe.

– Industrial centres in Germany have been totally emptied and the production has moved to Hungary and Romania. In these countries there is lack of support of labour conditions, lack of trade union acceptance, lack of labour-related legislation and lack of health standards, Caroline Jacobsson took as an example on how migration of production and jobs within in the EU can put pressure on labour market conditions.

One problem is how to measure productivity in more knowledge-based companies and modes of production. The general measures today are productivity on the shop floor, through-put-time and machine use. Management often wants to use the same simple measures on more complex and advanced work tasks.

– Research can help to visualise productivity. Production is not only the hours an engineer is sitting working at the table. Much more sophisticated measures are needed, Charlotte Brogren emphasised.

“The challenge is to compete by working smarter and creating competitive companies which also provide sustainable work for their employees.”

Charlotte Brogren, Director General, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, Stockholm.

“If EU makes policies, a voluntary approach is needed stating that we want to keep elaborated forms of production in Europe.”

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Develop guidelines and new indicators

Sometimes the real world is too much classified into systems of bipolarity, such as hard technology contra soft technology, white collar workers contra blue collar workers, employers contra employees.

– In Germany we try to leave the bipolar system. Instead we speak about individuals, institutions and networks that we want to target. Today we have talked about productivity and other isolated issues, but not very much about the whole vision, **Claudio Zettel**, Programme Manager, PT-DLR, Cologne, Germany, said and asked for further information in order to define an input to the Post-Lisbon Vision. He argued:

– The human technology interface is not only about productivity. Completely new forms of work organisations and new forms of skills are needed. Furthermore, there is an ethic dimension. The Post-Lisbon Vision needs to include and to build bridges between hard and soft technologies.

Ten years ago two researchers introduced the concept of the *High Road of Work Organisation*. Since then there have been a lot of research programmes going on, such as workplace development, innovative work design, innovative work systems and social innovation. In the EU-language it is altogether called “non-technological innovations”, though it is about more than work organisation, for instance marketing.

– Let’s do some conceptual work and find a concept that could be acceptable for all or most of us. Let’s develop concepts appropriate for policymaking, Frank Pot proposed and added:

– We know now that sustainability and innovation are buzz-words for the EU politicians and therefore we should include them in this conceptualisation.

Moreover, he stressed the importance of developing ideas on how sustainable work systems can get higher priorities in the Structural funds as well as in the Research and Innovation Framework Programmes, in particular the relation between work organisation and performance.

– I prefer the concept of performance instead of productivity because it can include all other soft issues and I think they are very strong. We also have to make clear that this type of work organisation can contribute to other policy fields such as employment and innovation, Frank Pot explained and asked for reviews and summaries of the last ten years’ research in order to evaluate whether there is sufficient evidence or not:

– I am convinced, but the issue is how we can convince others.

Finally, he suggested that the concept, the roles of the Structural Fund and the Framework Programmes as well as the research review should be discussed with stakeholders together with the present seven or eight EU research networks around work organisation:

– The work should be done by people who like to see behind their own concepts, for instance the present seven or eight EU networks around working life. It should also include young people to get fresh ideas and to make a new generation interested in work organisation issues.

Approach top management

Effectiveness and sustainable work can not be achieved by moving production from a high-cost country to a low-cost country. However, organisation of work in new ways can make a big difference. Furthermore, the research-based knowledge has to be implemented.

– The best way to disseminate is good examples. Another way is to penetrate the system and approach people who are able to translate and

implement the research results in a language understandable outside the research community, Charlotte Brogren said and pointed out that today's research mainly covers the what-questions:

– We have to make people aware of the importance of how-questions. They are important in the global competition.

To achieve a change of work organisation the companies' top management has to be involved in new ways. **Gunn Johansson**, Professor, Stockholm University, has been responsible for a project about healthier, more successful companies.

– It's not enough to involve HR managers, but also all of those who have to make strategic decisions about their companies and the competitiveness. In this development process it's quite possible to motivate top management to cooperate with researchers, not only in medicine and technology, but also in behavioural science, she said referring to the outcome of the project.

Gunn Johansson agreed on the difficulties to find hard evidence on the relation between good working conditions and productivity. She asked for more research in this field.

– But there are also possibilities to make small studies inside companies in collaboration with researchers and try to prove this positive relation within their own companies. Then it is easier to convince the top management when the results are presented in the company's own vocabulary, she explained, and pointed out that good working conditions are not only a question about their positive impact on productivity, but also on company branding and its attractiveness as a partner.

Gunn Johansson was asked whether the project has developed some indicators.

– No, we don't have any spectacular results but we found ways of transferring this kind of knowledge into organisations by building networks across regions, sectors and different types of organisations.

Update of Green Paper

The Social Dialogue at the EU level is going on within sectors as well as on cross-sector levels. The tendency is that the Commission transfer more and more to the Social Dialogue. Instead of legally binding directives which the governments are responsible to implement the social partners have to solve the problems on the labour market.

Åke Zettermark, Labour Market Expert, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations, Stockholm, gave some examples of the agreements between the social partners, for instance on telework, lifelong learning, stress at work and violence at work:

– In reality it means that there are big differences between Member States in the content of the agreements as well as in the implementation. There are problems in the new Member States where the social partners are weak.

The Post-Lisbon Vision implies that some issues have to be dealt with by the European governments. When the market does not manage to solve problems, the public policymakers have to intervene. Steven Dhondt has looked at organisation of work and sustainable work and tried to find whether there was a market failure and if so, the government has to do something:

– No, the market will not. The management will not be interested in sustainable work, but will the social partners? There are a lot of demands from the workers' side, but nobody is answering. **Steven Dhondt**, Senior Researcher, TNO Quality of Life, Tilburg, said and concluded:

“It's not enough to involve HR managers, but also all of those who have to make strategic decisions about their companies and the competitiveness.”

Gunn Johansson, Professor,
Stockholm University.

“There is certainly place for a EU policy. I am looking forward to an update of the Green Paper on work organisation.”

Steven Dhondt, Professor, TNO Quality of Life, Tilburg.

“We should look at best practice and transfer this knowledge. We should then apply it to the Open Method of Coordination.”

Werner Wobbe, Policy Officer, DG Research, Brussels.

“It we want to influence the European Strategy we need to use simple words to present our ideas.”

Frank Pot, professor, Nijmegen School of Management.

– There is certainly a place for an EU policy. I am looking forward to an update of the Green Paper on work organisation, which certainly is necessary.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has been working on the development of indicators. In the next European Working Conditions Survey in 2010 the researchers have tried to incorporate the new thinking about work organisation in the questionnaire.

In the Commission, there is an increasing awareness of that work organisation should be included in the Post-Lisbon vision. Little by little the topic is penetrating the system and the last *Employment in Europe* report did take up some of these issues. Moreover Eurostat wants to add some questions to the Labour Force Survey to find indicators.

– They will not call it work organisation since it is often seen as a prerogative for the employers, or, hopefully, the social partners. However, there will at least be some information about quality of work and it will be measured in all the different Member States, **Greet Vermeylen**, Research Manager, Eurofound, promised.

Include sustainable work systems in the EU 2020

Most important is to set up a goal to achieve, for instance “Modernize Europe by having modern work organisation, more innovative work and stronger competitiveness”. Moreover, certain instruments and resources are needed for the implementation.

– On a regional basis the Structural Funds can be used to develop pilot projects that will foster the knowledge and transfer across regions and countries, Werner Wobbe said, and also referred to the Innovation Framework Programme and the Research Framework Programme as possible funders of projects. He also emphasised that the Research Framework Programme need to be more distinctive concerning social science and the humanity area. Research supporting sustainable work systems is also needed, for instance to develop indicators, to establish guidelines and comparisons on the EU level.

– What can be done to transfer the knowledge, he asked and proposed:

– We should look at best practise and transfer this knowledge. We should then apply it to the Open Method of Coordination and exchange the knowledge between the member countries.

The social partners have to participate in the research review as well as in the network preparing the input to the Post-Lisbon Vision. A Nordic evaluation has shown that programmes with collaboration between governments, social partners and researcher had the best outcome.

– The Netherlands Centre for Innovation is funded by the social partners, but to be honest, the most active to advocate it is the employers, much more than the unions, Frank Pot said and added:

If we want to influence the European Strategy we need to use simple words to present our ideas. I would suggest “Simultaneous improvement of the forms and quality of working life”. Finally, the research is fragmented and the concepts are very different. To be heard we must organise ourselves better!

Time-consuming dialogue

The European Metalworkers Federation is translating research results into concrete action plans used in the process of collective bargaining. It concerns research in, for instance health and safety, workplace development and precarious work, and it is transformed into demands which the member organisation will implement on national levels.

– It means that 75 metalworker organisations use these research-based demands to raise questions and discussion with the employers, Caroline Jacobsson explained and continued:

– We have an implementation level of 67 per cent. It shows that research result can be transformed into concrete benefits to the actual workers.

The European Metalworkers Federation maybe has to re-evaluate the Social Dialogue. Today, the process is extremely time-consuming and from a cost-benefit perspective, the federation has to consider whether the work should go on.

– We are also facing difficulties with a new Commission and a new Parliament. This change will not make it easier to come to the table and discussion with employers. The question is how the new Commission will work as a facilitator of incentives to encourage the Social Dialogue, Caroline Jacobsson said and presented the only two examples of sector social dialogues.

– In the shipbuilding it took five years to get the employers to the table. Today we are mainly doing actions on image-building and on health and safety. The second sector is the steel industry and the dialogue will not begin until January 2010, she said and asked for better support to the Social Dialogue:

– We would really like to see further incentives and facilitation by the EU institutions to bring the employers and the employees together to a proper Social Dialogue.

The present crisis is mainly accentuating current trends, but some researchers think that the old economies are dying and that a new sustainable economy is emerging.

– We have to start a discussion about a new social contract or growth contract and how to manage the industrial process ahead of us and to manage in a human-friendly sustainable way, Antti Kasvio emphasised and made a comment on the Lisbon Strategy:

– There is a discussion about more and better jobs, but the question is what we mean by better jobs. We need more thinking in form of new jobs as sustainable jobs.

“We would really like to see further incentives and facilitation by the EU institutions to bring the employers and the employees together to a proper Social Dialogue.”

Caroline Jacobsson, Information & Communications Advisor, European Metalworkers Federation, Brussels.

“We have to start a discussion about a new social contract or growth contract and how to manage the industrial process ahead in a sustainable way.”

Antti Kasvio, Team Leader, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki.

Gross National Wellbeing – a challenge for the future



“Genes, sex and ageing are the only fixed factors affecting peoples’ health. The rest is depending on other factors, such as lifestyle and environment.”

Lennart Levi, MP, the Swedish Parliament, and Professor, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm.

What is well-being? According to the dictionary, the meaning is to be healthy, happy and prosperous. **Lennart Levi**, MP, the Swedish Parliament and Professor, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, wanted to introduce the concept of Gross National Wellbeing.

Unhealthy people are not able to produce and they can not pay taxes. The government does not get money enough to offer good public social security.

The young generation and their children have to work harder and longer. The age of retirement has probably to be put forward. That is a challenge!

– Genes, sex and ageing are the only fixed factors affecting peoples’ health. The rest is depending on other factors, such as lifestyle, environment and access to services. These are areas for political actions and decisions, Lennart Levi emphasised.

The knowledge is there, but...

Workload can be measured by various models and methods. A well-known approach is the demand-control-support model . If workers have high demands and little possibilities of influence and in addition low managerial support the stress load will increase and become a threat to peoples’ well-being and health.

– It is easy to give people more control over their life system, Lennart Levi said.

A complementary approach is effort-reward-imbalance model . Efforts can be very high because of too much work or over-involvement.

– If they get rewards, it will balance it. If they don’t get it, they are in problem. We can compensate for over-involvement and try to promote, he underlined and continued:

– Is it difficult? No, I don’t think so. Is there any need for it? Yes, there is. In Sweden, one out of four employees does not get any support from their superior.

Many employees are suffering from work-related mental health problems and stress-related disorders. Lennart Levi raised the question why we don’t act on the basis of the current knowledge and experience.

The EU Framework Directive implies that the employers have to ensure the workers’ safety and health.

– Why is it so difficult to implement it? Why are we not doing it? Do we have to wait for more research? Do we have the mandate for this, he asked and answered by referring to the Amsterdam treaty:

– It says that a high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all policies and activities. Why are we not focusing on it and acting?

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in Bilbao has asked experts about emerging risk in the working life. The top five psychosocial risks have been identified, such as new forms of employment contract as well as job insecurity, ageing workforce, work intensification, high emotional demands, and poor work-life balance.

The ILO has a list on stress prevention at work. It is about job control, job demands, justice at work, leadership, physical environment, social support, working time, workload and work-life balance.

– Do you have to be a professor to understand that? There is so much that has to be implemented, Lennart Levi emphasised.

Four critical gaps exist between science, policy, implementation and evaluation. Firstly, there is the transformation of research-based knowledge into policies. Then, there is the process from policy to implementation which not always is in line with the intentions of the policymakers. Therefore there is a need of evaluation and of feed back to the policymakers. If these gaps are bridged over, an effective loop is created.

Lennart Levi is organising a conference on Gross National Wellbeing to put workers' health on the policymakers' agenda:

– How much can be gained? Who gains and who pays the prices, he asked and concluded:

– We need to combine the top-down with the bottom-up principle. We have to empower the workers.

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12.00 Registration

13.00 Opening of the conference

Kenneth Abrahamsson, Programme Director, FAS, Stockholm, Sweden and *Jorma Karppinen*, Director, Eurofound, Dublin, Ireland.

Joakim Palme, Director, Swedish Institute for Future Studies, Stockholm, Sweden.

13.30 Sustainable and socially inclusive knowledge economy

Does the present Lisbon agenda address the needs and ambitions of all its stakeholders and will the fundamentals of its three pillars be the same when the recession ends?

Moderator: *Elisabeth Lagerlöf*, former Head of Information, Stockholm, Sweden.

Panel discussion:

Robert Strauss, Head of Unit, EES, CSR, Local Development, DG Employment, Brussels, Belgium.

Stefan Hult, Director, Division of Labour Law and Work Environment, Swedish Ministry of Labour, Stockholm, Sweden.

Jan Andersson, former MEP, Helsingborg, Sweden.

Donald Storrie, Head of Unit, Eurofound, Dublin, Ireland.

14.45 Jobs at any costs in times of economic crises?

Will the balance between social and economic sustainable work systems change when the economic recession recedes?

Moderator: *Kenneth Abrahamsson*, Programme Director, FAS, Stockholm, Sweden.

People first! *Wanja Lundby-Wedin*, President of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and President of ETUC, Stockholm, Sweden.

Business strategies, labour and employment – a crisis perspective. *Gijsbert van Liemt*, Senior Economist, Stockholm, Sweden.

15. 45 What constitutes a social sustainable work system?

Introductory speech by *Peter Docherty*, Professor, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden.

16.15-18.00 Workshops – coffee will be served at the workshop rooms

Workshop 1. Competitive attractive workplaces?

Can a sustainable work system address both short-term and long-term perspective?

Moderator: *Mats Essemyr*, Research Officer, the Swedish Confederation for Professional Employees (TCO), Stockholm, Sweden.

Introductory speakers: *Bernard Housset*, Independent expert of industrial relations, European Club for Human Resources, former Director of Social Programmes, Danone, France, *Greet Vermeylen*, Research Manager, Eurofound, Dublin, Ireland.

Workshop 2. The three pillars of the Lisbon agenda – are they stable enough?

How does the vision of a sustainable work systems based on high levels of social inclusion relate to convergence between productivity and quality of working life in the workplace? Presentation of good practise and case studies.

Moderator: *Sten Gellerstedt*, Research Officer, the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions, Stockholm, Sweden.

Introductory speakers: *Lena Abrahamsson*, Professor, Luleå University of Technology, Luleå, Sweden, and *Mikael Stenberg*, Project Leader, IF Metall, Mellersta Norrland, Sweden.

Workshop 3. Managing and organising for a sustainable work system

Can European management models for skills, competence and value creation support a sustainable work system?

Moderator: *Pär Larsson*, Acting Head of Working Life Department, VINNOVA, Stockholm, Sweden.

Introductory speakers: *Annika Hårenstam*, Professor, Gothenburg University, Gothenburg, *Edvard Lorenz*, Professor, University of Nice-CNRS, France and *Mari Kira*, Academy Research Fellow, Helsinki University of Technology, Helsinki, Finland.

Workshop 4. The workplace of the future

Can a sustainable work system address both static effectiveness, such as productivity and quality issues as well as dynamic effectiveness, such as learning, improvement and innovation issues?

Moderator: *Carin Håkansta*, Program Manager, FAS, Stockholm, Sweden.

Speakers: *Peter Nolan*, Professor, Centre for Employment Relations, Innovation and Change, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK, *Trine Pernille Larsen*, PhD, FAOS, Copenhagen, Denmark.

19.30 Dinner

The conference dinner at van der Nootska Palatset, Sankt Paulsgatan 21, green line or red line to Metro Station Slussen or red line to Metro Station Mariatorget, see map Lokala Kartan or link to www.vandernootska.se

PROGRAMME | 28 October 2009, Day 2

9.00 **Short presentations of the results of the workshops**

10.00 **Coffee-break**

10.30 **Post-Lisbon vision**

Moderator: *Kenneth Abrahamsson* and *Elisabeth Lagerlöf*.

Panel discussion about challenges

- Can the vision of sustainable work systems be translated into guidelines, which encourage Member States to adopt particular measures in support of new forms of work organisation characterised by convergence between productivity and quality of working life? What targets and indicators can be identified?
- How can the European Commission deploy its own resources (such as the Structural Funds) more effectively to encouraging enterprises to adopt new forms of work organisation?
- Particularly how to benchmark new sustainable forms of work organisation and their contribution to a post-recession European labour market?
- Which type of research is needed for the development and implementation of the Post-Lisbon vision?

Invited panelists: *Werner Wobbe*, Policy Officer, Economic Analysis and Monitoring of National Research Policies and the Lisbon Strategy, DG Research, Brussels, Belgium, *Charlotte Brogren*, Director General, VINNOVA, Stockholm, Sweden, *Frank Pot*, Professor of Social Innovation, Nijmegen School of Management, Nijmegen, the Netherlands, *Caroline Jacobsson*, European Metalworkers Federation, Brussels, Belgium, and *Antti Kasvio*, Professor, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki, Finland.

12.00 **Gross National Wellbeing – a challenge for the future**

Lennart Levi, MP, Swedish Parliament and professor emeritus, Karolinska Institute, Sweden.

12.30 **End of Conference**

12.45 **Luncheon**

14.00 **Departure**



FAS, the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, is promoting the accumulation of researchbased knowledge in matters relating to working life and the understanding of social conditions and processes. www.fas.se



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund

The Swedish ESF Council is the authority responsible for the implementation of the Social Fund (2007-2013) in Sweden. The purpose is to strengthen the individual's positions in working life, and hence contribute to increased employment and growth. www.esf.se



VINNOVA, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, is a State authority that aims to promote growth and prosperity throughout Sweden. Our particular area of responsibility comprises innovations linked to research and development. www.vinnova.se



The WORK-IN-NET Coordination Action will exchange and collect, analyse and spread information on existing national activities on work-related innovations, thus paving the way for joint, transnational initiatives in the future. www.workinnet.org



Eurofound

Eurofound, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, is a European Union body, one of the first to be established to work in specialised areas of EU policy. www.eurofound.europa.eu