

CEPLIS TELEGRAM



European Council of the
Liberal Professions
Coudenberg 70
B-1000 Brussels
Tel: +32.2.511.44.39
Email : ceplis@scarlet.be
<http://www.ceplis.org>



Date: 10/10/18

Pages: 12

N°16/18

-
- The Engineers Day 2018 on the 3rd of October in Vienna: Klaus Thürriedl calls for public awareness on the profession, Rudolf Kolbe reiterates the importance of Chambers
 - The French President's pension reform: what is the impact on the Liberal Professions?
 - Second general partnership meeting of the ongoing EU funded project on the Sustainability of the Social Dialogue in the field of Liberal Professions in Europe: Malta, 27th & 28th September 2018
 - Adequate social protection should be guaranteed to workers in all employment relationships
 - Transition management in a digitalized world of work: the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee
 - Citizen consultations in Paris: the Liberal Professions want "*more harmonization*"
 - News in Brief and Upcoming events

The Engineers Day 2018 on the 3rd of October in Vienna: Klaus Thürriedl calls for public awareness on the profession, Rudolf Kolbe reiterates the importance of Chambers

Engineers Day 2018, the flagship event of the Austrian Chamber of Architects and chartered Engineering Consultants, was held the 3rd of this month in the legendary Schönbrunn Castle of Vienna, one of the most prestigious venues in Europe. The event was attended by the Austrian Head of State, **President of the Federal Republic, Prof. Dr. Van der Bellen** who personally presented to a number of brilliant young engineers their prizes for excellence in research.

It was **Mr. Klaus Thürriedl**, Secretary General of our member the European Council of Engineer Chambers (ECEC), and a longstanding contributor to the works of CEPLIS, who had the honour to open the event. In his capacity as President of all Austrian sections of chartered Engineering Consultants, who are pioneers in the struggle to put Engineering services in the public spotlight, Mr. Thürriedl underlined that *“although the Austrian Engineering Services attract worldwide attention, public perception is low. Hence it results in a lack of young talents, despite the prospect of a well-paid career”*. The awards handed by the Head of State are obviously a substantial contribution towards attracting the attention of the public.

Very well attended, the Engineering Day gathered more than 300 participants who followed panel of expert discussions and listened to state of art keynote speeches. Addressing one of these panels, the President of CEPLIS, **Mr. Rudolf Kolbe**, who was recently elected President of the Federal Austrian Chamber (see [article](#)) discussed the need of an institution of independent engineers in Europe. Our President highlighted the importance of Chambers: *“The system of chambers offers a balance of interests to all professional groups that are included in the system. If the system of chambers would not exist we would have a lobbying-regime which prefers only the financially strong enterprises or members”*.



From the right to left Prof. Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen, President Klaus Thürriedl and President Rudolf Kolbe

For further information on this, please go to: www.ingenieurtag.at

The French President's pension reform: what is the impact on the Liberal Professions in France?

At the electoral campaign that brought him to power back in June 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron had stated that *"We will create a universal retirement system where one euro of contribution gives the same pension rights, whenever it has been paid, whatever the status of the person."* This article aims at pointing out the consequences of this reform of the French pension system on the Liberal professions. In fact, professionals in the current system are subjected to lower social income contributions than others professional categories.

In France the pension system is based essentially on two pillars operated by means of a pay-as-you-go arrangement whereby the pensions of the existing retired population are paid by the workers currently contributing to the system. There is, first of all, a basic 'general regime', which covers virtually all employed workers (with a separate regime covering civil servants) and is managed by the State. This arrangement co-exists with two compulsory, complementary regimes that are managed by the social partners.

According to the French government, this pay-as-you-go retirement scheme in France is equitable but unsustainable with contributions close to 28% of wages in average. The Macron reform will seek to unify pension rights and rules. The complexity of the current system makes it very hard for workers to



understand their entitlements, particularly when they switch jobs and pension schemes, argues Monika Queisser, head of the OECD's Social Policy Division in Paris. *"Macron is aiming to make the system more uniform,"* she adds, *"making it easier to continue to build benefits based on the same rules when switching jobs."*

Two important consequences of this reform for the liberal professionals should be underlined. First of all, this new pension system will impact the CIPAV (Caisse Interprofessionnelle de Prévoyance et d'Assurance Vieillesse). On the one hand, the CIPAV risks losing almost all of its insured persons, who are deposited in the general scheme. On the other hand, the Liberal Professions and self-employed workers fear a harmonization of the contribution rates because at equal ceiling they contribute much less than the employees, who are at 28% against less than 10% for physiotherapists, orthoptists, and other healthcare. Pharmacists contribute 15%, architects and other liberal professions 17%, farmers 11%. It is clear that the independents would be the big losers by the future unified regime.

Second general partnership meeting of the ongoing EU funded project on the Sustainability of the Social Dialogue in the field of Liberal Professions in Europe: Malta, 27th & 28th September 2018

The second meeting of the transnational partnership in charge of the EU funded project on Social Dialogue for the Liberal Professions was held with success in Malta the 27th and 28th of this last September. Led by our member Confprofessioni, the project aims at ensuring the implementation of a revisited Social Dialogue in order to promote new guidelines for the sustainability of professionals' working conditions and practices. Several stakeholders including representatives of professional organisations and unions from Italy and Malta as well as Eurocadres and CEPLIS were invited to attend this focus group.

The event organized by our Maltese colleagues of MFPA was an opportunity for each stakeholder to exchange ideas and learn about methods of national cooperation in the field of Liberal Professions. The focus group was held as part of the project aiming at confirming the role of Social Dialogue Mechanism for the Sustainability of the professionals threatened by the impact of digitalization on employment and competence. In fact, technologies such as artificial intelligence were identified as key strategic drivers of future employment. Several participants have however highlighted that even if digitalization might be seen as an opportunity to increase employment, it is felt by some professionals that technology tends to create a separation between those who are competent with IT and those who are not. For example, new graduates are often seen as not qualified enough for certain jobs since they lack soft skills. Same for professionals of a certain age who are likely to become more and more unemployable as they do not comply with new professional requirements relating to digitalization shift.

The future of Liberal Professions sector involves both Professionals themselves and their employees. While the future of Professionals depends on their own capacity to adapt and innovate supported by the associations of Liberal Professions, the future of employees challenging by the emergence of new technologies depends on the capacity of social partners to anticipate and mitigate the impact of this digitalization shift. To this end, the role of social partners is crucial.

In that sense, methods of national collective bargaining have also been well debated. Italian and Maltese stakeholders have exchanged views and information about how the representation of lobbying organisations of Liberal Professions is nationally structured. This was very useful in order to identify differences among member states but also among different sectors of the economy. In sectors where Social Dialogue and methods of collective bargaining might be seen as effective with relevant legislation and acquis, in the field of Liberal Professions those are appearing to be weak and collective national bargaining is yet to be developed. The Project members concluded on the necessity to foresee the consolidation of Social Dialogue in countries with a weak tradition and foster the process towards collective bargaining in countries where these mechanisms are already in force.

As you know CEPLIS is a major partner in this project and has several times expressed itself on these issues by notably the intervention of our President and of the Director General in front of the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee.



2nd Partnership meeting on the Sustainability of Social Dialogue in the field of the Liberal Professions

Adequate social protection should be guaranteed to workers in all employment relationships

Sustainable social protection schemes, based on solidarity and equality, will have a major impact on Europe's future, says the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

Access to social protection is a key element in a fairer society, yet for many people on Europe's labour market and in particular for those in new forms of work or for the self-employed, that access is becoming increasingly inadequate, the EESC warned in its Opinion on the European Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed persons.

The Recommendation on social protection is one of the initiatives undertaken by the Commission under the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPRS). Under this Recommendation, every worker – including those in atypical forms of work and the self-employed – should be granted concrete and effective access to social protection systems. The Recommendation also aims at helping Member States to close gaps in access to social protection for all people at work.

In an Opinion, presented at its September plenary session, the EESC urged authorities at all levels, as well as civil society and social partners in the European Union, to work together towards restoring social sustainability "with a broader objective of creating a level playing field in the social area, where everyone under the same rules and at comparable conditions can enjoy access to social protection".

In EESC's view, everybody should have the right to a decent life, social protection and protection against risks, including healthcare, and the right to a dignified retirement in old age. This coverage should be guaranteed to all workers, regardless of their personal conditions, backgrounds, or their employment relationship and labour market status, in line with the principles contained in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

"The EU must encourage equality among European citizens and we need to talk about social sustainability of our societies", the rapporteur for the opinion, Giulia Barbucci, told the plenary. "Our task is to reconfirm the European social model and to rebuild trust in the EU and thus combat the proliferation of Euroscepticism. This will have an effect on the future of the EU".

The EESC called on the Member States to explore ways of funding social security systems in a way which not only ensures the sustainability of these systems, but also makes them more inclusive so as to guarantee access to those systems for people in new labour relationships and for the self-employed, as well as for all vulnerable groups.



It recommended that Member States should draw up specific national action plans to report on the gaps in the implementation of the Recommendation identified by the Commission's impact assessment accompanying it.

Civil society and social partners would have an active role to play when it comes to governance of social protection at national level, Ms. Barbucci said, adding it has been already shown they could contribute immensely to closing the gaps in access to social protection. The Commission should also be able to find ways of helping Member States to address shortcomings in their social security systems.

Social rights should also be transferable, and workers who transfer between different jobs and different labour market employment relationships should be able to keep them. Alongside access to social protection, it must be ensured that the coverage itself is also effective.

The EESC said it believed that initiatives that were to be undertaken under the Recommendation should provide "adequate benefits and provisions". *"This should include safety nets for those who are not able to reach minimum entitlement thresholds, in particular for those who are unable to work and their families"*, Ms Barbucci maintained.

Since age and gender are among the main reasons for exclusion of people from social protection schemes, the EESC said these two factors should be given special attention when defining actions falling under the scope of the Recommendation.

Transition management in a digitalized world of work: the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee

Digital transition in the EU should be underpinned by respect for European values and supported by more robust social policies so as to ensure that no one is left behind. European society as a whole – workers, companies and the general public alike – should instead be able to benefit from the huge potential offered by new technologies, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) said at its July plenary.

In its opinion on EU concepts for transition management in a digitalised world of work, requested by the Austrian Presidency of the EU, the Committee lists a number of top 3 priorities for the EU which should make sure that the benefits of digitalisation can be reaped.

First of all, this includes **upskilling European workers** meaning that jobs are likely to be altered as a consequence of automation, digitalisation and artificial intelligence. Then, the Committee considers upskilling for European workers to be a priority, particularly for those whose low or obsolete skills prevent them from taking up the new jobs or the jobs that will be modified as a result of technologies. It stresses the urgent need for a policy at EU and Member State levels to transform initial training and life-long learning to promote relevant teaching methods, so as to develop the creative and digital skills that are increasingly required for the new jobs.

This opinion also points out the **need to strengthen social security systems and ensuring diversity in the workplace** so that, for example, jobs in digital sectors are no longer dominated by men. The situation in sectors with a strong digital component is quite alarming in terms of the low number of women.

The EESC warned, however, that investment in social policies accounted for only 0.3% of total public expenditure in the EU, and said that this should be beefed up. Sufficient resources, in particular under the forthcoming post-2020 multiannual financial framework, should be made available to strengthen these policies and support the digital transformation in the world of work, for the benefit of workers, companies and society as a whole.

Reiterating its support for a *“human-in command”* approach to digitalisation, the EESC said it encouraged the development of socially responsible artificial intelligence that served the common good.

Citizen consultations in Paris: the Liberal Professions want "more harmonization"

On the 13th of last September in Paris, about twenty representatives of the Liberal Professions participated in a consultation on Europe at the call of one of their representative organizations, the *Union Nationale des Professions Libérales* (UNAPL).



Representatives of midwives, dentists, lawyers and insurers met to give their concerns about the quality of the services they are able to offer to their patients and clients in the current Single Market. A representative of the European Commission, Konstantinos Tomaras, gave them advice on how to convince, in the first place, national governments.

Until now, professional organizations have been consulting few times in the 28 EU Member States to bring their concerns back to European decision-makers. *"This is very important for us,"* confirms Konstantinos Tomaras, the representative of the European Commission.

French representatives of the Liberal Professions have managed to identify a number of *"major challenges"* that concern them in Europe. Despite the disparity of their activities (Liberals would be 1.1 million in France, generating 10% of GDP), all call in particular for more harmonization in the European Union.

Training, skills, ethics, status, conditions of practice ... *"We all want to enhance harmonization on these issues"*, summed François Blanchecotte, President of the European Affairs Committee of UNAPL Europe as *"it is perceived today is the Europe of finance, the Europe of the free movement of capital, and what citizens want is equitable and healthy regulation among all European professions."*

For instance, the status of corporate lawyer, which exists in Germany or Spain, does not exist in France. Some medical professions are regulated here and there, but not elsewhere. The same diplomas sometimes cover very different levels of competence from one Member State to another. Beyond the questions that raise in terms of professional mobility, *"we have the feeling that citizens are not treated in the same manner everywhere in Europe"*, says a midwife.

According to the professionals, harmonization should not be done to the detriment of the specific needs of the patients of different countries. But it would be necessary for citizens to trust professionals coming from other European countries. As for training, for example, *“the idea would not necessarily be to reform each national diploma in order to achieve a common one. The idea is more about creating a European reference system to know from the outset where we can go to work with such diploma, and whether or not we will need an upgrade”*, concretely propose the professionals.

Second major concern of these French professionals: the financialization of their sectors of activity, which creates new distortions between European countries. *“The arrival of financiers highlights the profitability of the company, and no longer the services that we provide to consumers, patients or customers,”* they regret. Others are also wondering about the development of digital technology, which would dehumanize their activities and exclude some of the users.

“We must be aware that we are talking about a Union with 27 or 28 Member States, with different systems,” warned Konstantinos Tomaras during the workshop. *“Behind every statement of principle on harmonization, it is difficult to go into the concrete, observes the representative of the European Commission. For the recognition of professional qualifications of architects for example, it has taken 15 years to reach an agreement. And at the time, we were only between 6 and 9 member states! ”*

“But we can not do everything,” says Konstantinos Tomaras. *“We are not in a federal state. There is the question of subsidiarity (education and taxation are in principle within the field of competence of member states, for example), there are national particularities. And then there are about 800 different categories of regulated professions in Europe, so if it is up to the Commission to set up structures to bring them, it would need a budget allocated, which is difficult”*.

To make their voices heard, the Commission's representative urges professionals to come together in *“open and active associations at European Union level”*, such as the Council of Bars and Law Societies, which promotes certain models of conduct. *“Sometimes it's better to find voluntary rather than regulatory solutions,”* he breathes. Claire Versini, of the Jacques Delors Institute, finally takes the opportunity to remind that the next European elections will be held in 2019: *“You can also go see your deputies to try to trace some of your proposals.”*

News in Brief

- CEPLIS is very proud to announce that our **President Rudolf Kolbe**, also President of the Chamber of Architects and Consultants for Engineering for the Federal Land of Upper Austria and the Federal Land of Salzburg, has recently been elected President of the Federal Austrian Chamber of Civil Engineers. Also a member and spokesperson of the Group III of the European Economic and Social Committee, President Rudolf Kolbe will not be just another representative of the almost 9000 architects and civil engineers of Austria, he is in fact bringing tremendous experience in professional representation of the Liberal Professions at the international level.



- On last Tuesday, October the 9th, President Victoria Ortega of the Spanish organisation Unión Profesional, and Vice-president of CEPLIS, has presented the new edition of the program of the Direction and Management of Professional Associations. In this fifth edition, new approaches and tools are incorporated to adapt the professional environment to the changing needs and possibilities brought by the evolution of new technologies.

Upcoming events

- **Information day for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises: regulatory toolbox for medicines and combined devices developers**

When? 26th October 2018

Who organises it? European Medicines Agency

To whom? Companies assigned SME status by EMA and representatives of stakeholders organisations

The SME info day provides an update on regulatory affairs topics for developers of human medicines and combined devices. It covers subjects such as data exclusivity and market protection, orphan and paediatric rewards, legal basis for submission of a marketing authorisation application, conditional marketing authorisations and approvals under exceptional circumstances, classification of advanced therapies and EMA activities in relation to the new medical device legislation.

- **INDTECH 2018 – Innovation industries for smart growth**

When? 29th – 31st October 2018

Who organises it? Austria Research Promotion Agency, Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

To whom? Researchers, industry and policymakers

The conference, which will be held under the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU, is a platform for researchers, industry and policymakers to take further steps to strengthen European

industrial and research policy in general, and in the fields of nanotechnology, advanced materials and production technologies in particular.