



SOCIAL ACTION, INNOVATION, REFLECTION AND EXCHANGE LABORATORY

12TH LASAIRE BIENNALE 2015-2017

(summary document)

“ANTICIPATION AND PARTICIPATORY CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN COMPANIES DURING A PERIOD OF CRISIS AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE”

This project falls under the cycle of Lasaire’s biennial “Europe, Work, Employment” conferences. It is financed by the European Commission.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The aim of this project is to promote innovative actions for employee involvement to help their representatives anticipate changes in companies, promote the social dialogue and transnational cooperation against the background of restructuring operations and changes such as mergers, acquisitions, and relocations, and the effects of outsourcing on companies and groups of companies operating at the EU scale. It aims to deepen their knowledge of the EU’s policy tools on employee involvement and to promote exchanges on innovative practices in this field.

APPROACH:

Our project will broach the following questions:

How have employees been involved or taken action in anticipation and change management in companies in the context created by the economic crisis and technological changes since 2008?

- Our assumption is that such participation is exercised through the national and transnational representatives in European works councils and under international framework agreements. Is there also intervention from ad hoc bodies created at the initiative of works councils or by joint agreement? What conclusion can be drawn from their activity?
- In countries with a double channel of representation, there is in theory a difference in the mode of representation between elected bodies (information and consultation) and trade unions (negotiation). Isn’t there a perceptible dilution of the boundary or a

growing intertwining between the two types of competence at the national level and on the European scale?

- When change occurs in a multinational company, how are the different levels of employee representation (branch, company, group) coordinated? To what extent are the different representation bodies capable of defining common supportive positions? Are they subjected to competitive strategies? How, in particular, can possible social conflicts be assessed and managed?
- What are the areas of intervention of employee representatives in change management? Are they limited to the priority objectives of defending employment and working conditions, or are they expanded to a discussion on the overall strategy of the company (or the group), particularly in European works councils, for which it is the core task?
- How can the technical intervention capacity of employees be built up in anticipation of change management? What are the rights in terms of access to economic information, training of representatives, calling on expertise inside or outside representative bodies?

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT:

The implementation of the project comprises three phases:

- **A study phase** that relies on abundant general, theoretical and empirical literature as well as on various sources that provide many case studies. The method is based on the choice of qualitative studies pertaining to a sample of multinationals present in several Member States.

* At first glance, we intend to rely on the following business cases: Holcim - Lafarge merger (cement), General Electric - Alstom merger (electrical construction), Iberia - British Airways merger (air transport), Nokia - Alcatel merger (telecom), Thyssen-Krupp restructuring (metallurgy), Chèque Déjeuner [meal vouchers] (services), FNAC restructuring (services), Bosch restructuring (equipment manufacturer), ST Microelectronic (electronic).

The studies will be conducted in close cooperation with the representatives of employees and of management of those companies from questions referenced in the approach to the project. Six countries are particularly targeted in these case studies: Germany, Romania, Spain, Italy, Belgium and France.

- **A participatory phase where the works will be presented and discussed during the seminars** in the 5 countries (Germany, Romania, Spain, Italy, Belgium) which will bring together some fifty participants each, half from the country in which the seminar is held (trade unionists and employers of European companies, and experts), the other participants stemming from the steering committee enlarged to include European partners and the Lasaire network of companies. For France, the studies will be examined during the conclusive conference.

This phase could make it possible to focus our responses on the intervention procedures for employee representatives: information-consultation by the EWC, participation in the board of directors/union council of a European company, negotiation of a transnational company agreement by a European trade union federation and/or a EWC.

Reports will be drawn up on the different seminars as will a final summary of the best proposals that emerged from our discussions and studies.

- **Third phase:** These five seminars will be capped by a final conclusive conference in France attended by 150 participants, most of whom social stakeholders from European multinational companies from the largest number of EU countries, experts from these different countries, representatives from European and national institutions, so as to be able to report on the works in the different seminars and expand our discussion beyond countries in which we will have held a seminar. A report on this conference will be drawn up as will a summary of the main innovative proposals.

By history and structure an association that brings together trade unionists, employers and experts in a participatory process to bolster social relations in Europe, Lasaire has been mandated for the project by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), by the Spanish Workers' Commissions (CCOO), by the FGTB in Belgium and by the CFDT in France.

We moreover have the support of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the Greek European Economic and Social Committee (ECC), the Bulgarian Economic and Social Committee, the Belgian National Economic Council (CNT), the Italian Association Bruno Trentin, the Spanish Foundations 1st May and Largo Caballero, the German trade union IG Metall, and the Romanian trade union Cartel ALFA.

A steering committee has been set up to bring together our different European partners in the form of an orientation committee (April 2016 and July or September 2017) and more select committees between the two (3), with 2 representatives from the country hosting the seminars.

The action will be carried out over 2 years as of 15 December 2015.

WORK PLAN:

- Launch of business case studies by Lasaire: 1 January 2016 – September 2016
- Meeting of the orientation committee with our European partners: 24 April 2016, implementation of the entire project, adjustment of business case studies and preparation of seminars in the different European countries.
- **Seminars:**
 - Spain : October 2016
 - Belgium : December 2016
 - Italy : February 2017
 - Romania : April 2017
 - Germany : June 2017

Each seminar will be prepared by a select steering committee and a report and summary will be drawn up.

- Finalisation of the studies for the preparation of the conclusive conference: July or September 2107.
- Orientation committee meetings: July or September 2017
- Study and conclusive conference – Paris (France): October 2017
- Report and overall summary of innovative proposals stemming from the studies and reports on the seminars: November 2017

End of the project and submission of the final document and financial statement to the Commission: End of November 2017

The orientation committee set up:

- Jean-Cyril Spinetta, Chairman of Lasaire, Honorary Chairman of Air France KLM
- Roger Briesch, Lasaire delegate for Europe, former Chairman of the EESC
- Joël Decaillon, Executive Vice-Chairman of Lasaire, former Deputy General Secretary of ETUC
- Anne Marie Grozelier, General Secretary of Lasaire, Researcher,
- Udo Rehfeldt, Researcher at IRES France
- Robert Mounier-Vehier, Lasaire Treasurer
- Guy Juquel, Lasaire project leader
- Jacques Freyssinet, Professor emeritus
- André Gauron, Economist
- Joël Maurice, Economist
- Hugues Bertrand, Economist
- Michel Fried, Economist
- Pierre Héritier, Founding Member of Lasaire
- Georges Dassis, President of the EESC
- Gaby Bischoff, President of Workers' Group II, EESC
- Yvan Ricordeau, National secretary, CFDT France
- Ramon Baeza Sanjuan, Director gerente of the 1st May Foundation, Spain
- Almudena Asenjo, President of the Largo Caballero Foundation, Spain
- Wolfgang Schroeder, IG Metall, Germany
- Bogdan Iulu Hossu, President of the trade union Cartel ALFA, Romania
- Fulvio Fammoni, President of the Bruno Trentin Association, Italy
- Wolfgang Kowalsky, Advisor, ETUC, Belgium
- Paul Windey, President of the CNT, Belgium
- Anne Demelenne, former General Secretary of the FGTB and member of the EESC, Belgium
- Rudy De Leeuw, President of the FGTB