

Local Welcoming Policies for EU mobile Citizens

Wednesday 18 May 2016

Workshop 5: Labor Market (Arbeit und Leben – Hamburg /Fairwork Amsterdam)

Moderator: Ed Klute

General introduction by Ed Klute:

- Share information about what is happening in different countries and come up with recommendations which will be presented to the panel on Thursday, May 19th. Ed explains what will be done with recommendations and talks about the working visits that will take place on Thursday. Unfortunately, there will be no working visit on the subject of labor market.
- EU Mobile Citizens is a whole diversity of people. Ed asks participants to keep that in mind during the presentations, since there are different kind of migrants. Welcome policies in Amsterdam target high educated people, the same is also happening in Copenhagen. However, in other cities, the EU mobile citizens are not only high educated people but also people with a lower education that work in the service industry or other and that have come to make money in a positive way, that is to send money back home to their families. An example of different kind of levels of immigrants is Gothenburg. They talk about Roma, although they are also EU citizens. It is interesting to see the different approach people have to Roma and a Romanian university professor for example.
- Labor market: it is important to think about different perspectives. In Amsterdam there are several issues, such as criminality or sex labor. Often the people involved are EU Mobile Citizens.

Presentation 1: Service Agency for EU Migrant Workers, Hamburg

Speaker: Rüdiger Winter

- Workers Education Association: They have a long tradition in providing training courses, mobility programs.
- It is a challenge to deal with different languages and legal frameworks in other countries and for EU citizen difficult to get orientation.
- 40% of its employees are from other EU countries and they are proud of it.
- Rüdiger emphasizes that we need to try to address EU migrants coming to our countries in an open minded way and not see them as a social benefit. In Germany there were restrictions on Polish, Bulgarian and Romanians for the labor market, that results on them getting into trouble.
- Many people successfully move to other countries and many others run into trouble because they are vulnerable due to their personal situation, meaning that they are ready to make sacrifices, accept poor labor i.e. and thus fall victim of greed for profit by employers.
- It is a public responsibility to provide support and help to EU mobile workers. Their situation is not only a result of their lack of languages or skills but there are also structural risk factors.
- Background on exploitation.

- Directive 2014/54/UE
- Service Agency background: Native speakers provide information, it is important that mobile workers can ask questions in their own language. Among the agencies employees, two have worked for the Polish consulate in Hamburg and the Consulate-General of Bulgaria. These colleagues are linked to their communities in Hamburg, they have meetings with colleagues from other service providers, with other Polish and Bulgarian consultants.
- Tasks: It's not a one stop shop. The Agency cooperates closely with other agencies that are specialized in other issues and has a stand-alone position on labor law in Hamburg.
- Round table of authorities: Rüdiger is chairing.
- What does the Agency do: 3.400 clients & 9.400 consultations per year
- Patterns of labor exploitation.
- Clients by home country: Polish are the biggest group. About 50% works in construction and cleaning (employer mostly temporary work agency).
- Local cooperation network: The Agency works i.e. with the social attaché of the Romanian Embassy in Hamburg, they cooperate and discuss issues of Romanian migrant workers. Also, the Agency has applied for special funding from the Spanish Ministry of Labor in order to provide seminars to Spanish workers and it has also applied for funding at the Polish Consulate for issues regarding Polish workers.
- Transnational cooperation: Talks with representatives of 13 EU countries labor inspectorates, in order to see if administrative structures between German authorities and other countries match. In Germany Customs Authorities deal with illegal work but not with working conditions. The General-Directorate of the Custom Authorities is in Cologne, it is the national liaison office for transnational cooperation but some matters are for the local authorities.
- The Trade Union has to deal with the fact that there is an EU labor market and workers are moving from country to country, these workers need protection and it has to be provided.

Workshop discussions:

Javier Garrigues Florez: He congratulates the initiative and approach to a complex issue. He says that it is a positive approach and that the term EU Mobile Citizens is the correct approach. Also, mobility is a fundamental right, a reality, but it should not be taken for granted in the particular political moment that we go through in the EU. We must work for its consolidation with a realistic approach and think about the real problems involved. Migration is a very complex issue since it addresses different groups of people. That all is happening at the same time it is a characteristic of our contemporary society. Spain has different layers of migrants, the workers that left in the '60s are now integrated, however, there are others that are less integrated, there are also the new waves of Spanish immigrants, skilled young professionals but also other with no skills that have difficulties. Suggest approaching different circumstances with different tools because situations change. He congratulates Hamburg's approach and the local cooperation.

Question: Would the same apply in Amsterdam and/or the Netherlands? At the Consulate we are one extra piece of the puzzle and we can help our citizens by giving them the right information.

Ed Klute: It is important to know. The example of Hamburg is beautiful. Cooperation with Embassies and Consulates is not on the radar. From the city authorities' side there is no cooperation. Hamburg is good example, it works there but approach would have to be different in other town(s).

Rüdiger Winter: Provide information in home countries before people move to other countries. The Agency supported a campaign in Bulgaria – in cooperation with Trade Union Federation – providing information before people come to Germany.

Javier Garrigues Florez: There is often misinformation; Spanish people think that Germany is the promised land.

Piotr Perczynski: Can relate. It's much better that people are informed before they go, but there is no effective way to get the people to learn this information. A lot has been tried: campaigns, a good webpage of the Dutch Embassy in Warsaw. People don't look for it. The Embassy in the Netherlands would be happy to be approached and try to inform the people. But when they come to Embassy it is because they are in trouble. He suggests that the Trade Unions in the hosting countries have to convince the people that are not members of a trade union to become a member. The trade unions should also help people who are not member. The Temporary Agencies are an issue since a long list of problems can occur. In Germany the temporary work agencies are a smaller problem than in the Netherlands since they are licensed. In the Netherlands they can open and close the next day.

Presentation 2: Fairwork, the Netherlands

Speaker: Lidwien Gall

- Important to inform people about their rights, identify potential victims because police is not always in the position to help people or because the workers have no residence permit or because of the stigma of the police.
- Focus on severe cases and direct people with small complains to providers they can help them.
- Labor exploitation in the Netherlands doesn't get enough attention. Often is about the employer and the sanctions imposed to him, we see that the victim or potential victim, don't get something back.
- How is that related to welcoming policy? Labor exploitation can be prevented if you identify it. When exploitation takes place in your city, you have to see how to deal with it. The Netherlands is improving; however a lot of Dutch cities are denying that exploitation takes place.

The following video is showed: De champignonplukker – Slavernij in NL
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3qg1NOR0fA>

- First impression after watching the video, what shall we do? What is shown in the video happens in many places. Many provinces don't realize it's happening in their region.
- Fairwork offers to look and spread information on labor rights, where there is indication on trafficking.
- Ways to do it: Via cultural mediation, volunteers – mostly high skilled – that have been living in the Netherlands for a long time, who see the problems their fellow citizens are facing and want to help them by spreading information. They go to the market, church, migrant information points. While they do that they meet people whose rights are abused, they identify the people that are being abused. They also go online, on Facebook, many companies – especially with Polish workers – have websites that get very bad reviews. They Polish are often on Facebook, while Hungarians use special fora. The mediators try to get in contact this way. They also target through Facebook on specific geographic area and language.

Javier Garrigues Florez: The outreach policy is a generation problem; there are not the young ones, but those that don't have the skills to enter social media, that they can only be reached through communities.

Lidwien Gall: We do both, at churches etc., but also online. Also undocumented migrants are online.

Piotr Perczynski: A great majority +/- 90% are 20-30 years old, in principal online. If you see a documentary like this on Polish TV it could be a warning, not to scare but to inform that a situation like this is possible. The lady [of the documentary] was exploited by a criminal organization, but what did she sign? She got a contract because the money is digitally distributed. What actually happened? There was a thought to include such a story in a sitcom, because people watch it. Couldn't find people interested in it. If you see something like this in a sitcom you will think twice.

Lidwien Gall: The outreach methods try to focus on what works and what not, online or in the church. If we find something interesting, we share. We want to share what we see with others, give advice. Often the city doesn't recognize when the people are registering that they might be potential victims. Try to train people to recognize the potential victims. Get municipalities to become aware that they have a role in this.

Eric de Jonge: A general remark, the focus on labor market problems are about people already working and have problems. But I from the other side, what I get from here, is information, in a language they know and in a way they know. Giving information in a language they understand is a gain of time.

Lidwien Gall: As authority you can be proactive with companies, ask them if people are registered, where they are working. Municipalities can participate to the discussion in order to prevent problems.

Eric de Jonge: We should get people that are concerned evolved. We talk about them but we have to evolve them.

Rüdiger Winter: In Hamburg there is a broad spectrum of service providers. It is not only a matter of information but also of protection and supporting people is trouble. Labor unions are obliged to provide information only to their members because they pay and because of statutes.

Piotr Perczynski: It is true that a great majority doesn't have any problems, they come and contribute 0.3% to the GDP by paying taxes in the Netherlands, doing jobs Dutch don't want to do. They bring money back home, have no trouble with the law or the authorities, they do temporary work, coming back to the same place, so there is no abuse. The general picture is positive, it works. Unfortunately the abusive element is visible and not adequately addressed. The embassy helps when problems arise.

Rüdiger Winter: Slaughterhouses have 10-30% own staff, 60-70% posted workers from other countries, in shipyards the working people are Bulgarian, Polish etc. and they get far lower wages. It's a structural problem.

Javier Garrigues Florez: In agreement with the Polish colleague. We are here to focus on exemption because in general it works. Mobility and migration are a positive and complex phenomenon. To get the whole picture, look also Dutch citizens coming to Spain and are cheated by medical tourism or tourism in general. It is essential to use trusted channels to provide information, in a language they understand and channels they trust.

Erik de Jonge: There is no denial about the labor market's problems, but in Brussels the problem is for low skilled workers that can't find their way in the labor market. There is a solution to every problem. Don't believe in general ways to welcome people. Every city has its ways because the reality of each one is different. If you focus on welcoming policies, it should be a variety of services. Trade unions are good but other organizations too.

Ed Klute: Elements focused on problems, everything starts with good information, 1) It is important to have correct information, through correct channels and language. Most institutions think on traditional ways to reach the people, but they have to think about possible new ways. The internet works like the word on the street; someone told someone something – the trusted channels. How to intervene?

Lidwien Gall: Talk to people and ask them where they get their information. It differs per nationality and education level.

Rüdiger Winter: By going local because migrants rely on social connections. Bulgarian migrants migrate to town quarters where other Bulgarian and Turkish people live and the Turkish are the ones that exploit them and make them depend on their support and put them in illegal working conditions.

Ed Klute: How to protect people? How to support people already on the labor market, with language courses, spread the information, inform people on what to do. How to reach out? By going to neighborhoods but also online groups. What is happening is that everybody making polices are 50+ and don't know how it works. New generations are needed to learn how to communicate.

Recommendations:

Piotr Perczynski: Look for most unconventional ways to get to this people as soon as possible and rely on embassies in hosting countries as a mean to supply information. Who are we targeting with the information? Unskilled labor force, Polish skilled labors are in the UK because they didn't want to wait for the EU market to become an open market. We know who to target. Tailor made approach.

Ed Klute: One stop approach, support city councils to analyze what is happening, inform them about different issues.

Piotr Perczynski: Cooperating on a general level is really important. What Hamburg has is unique.

Rüdiger Winter argues for a variety of services and division of services provided. But everyone has to know where to send the migrant.

Piotr Perczynski: Coordination is a place where to discuss how problems can be distributed.

Ed Klute: There should be an organization that has to be above parties and brings everybody together. Strength is in how to reach a group. Look at protection side, but also other part of facilities.

Erik de Jonge: Recognition diplomas. Not that urgent as for third country citizens. No policy in EU level. What could city council do to facilitate? What to ask? Coordinating policy on labor, should be part of welcome policy? What can the city council do? Can it play a role? They should be able to identify problems. Levels of responsibilities: Transnational level. Communication between ministries would have to be dealt in EU level?

Lidwien Gall: EU mobility project Bulgarian-Romanian-Polish, the Dutch embassies are informing citizens that want to work in the Netherlands and Fairwork shares information with the embassies. The given information should be neutral.

Rüdiger Winter: On the EU level transnational cooperation between NGO's and authorities. Need improvement, IMI information system should be better used, start information campaigns at schools.

Javier Garrigues Florez: The Embassy has little means, we can though provide information, be a trusted channel, but people only come to the embassy when they have a problem. We need to know what advice to give to them, who to approach. Embassies need to be on the radar, tell people to contact them. Recommendations should go to other cities as well.

Piotr Perczynski: Thousands of euros are spent every year for programs for avoiding work abuse.

Ed Klute: Are embassies responsible for their citizens that they wish to stay? People come to embassies when in trouble, what is responsibility of embassies for mobile citizens?

Conclusions

- **Information is important. It needs to be provided in a language the people understand and through trusted channels.**
- **Transnational cooperation needs to be improved.**
- **City councils need to be more involved and train people to recognize the problems**
- **No one-stop shop but information has to be available so that agencies/organizations/embassies know where to send people.**