

MATRA Training for European Cooperation

(MTEC)

Social Affairs / Employment

April 16 – May 4, 2007



The Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael”



Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies, AIAS



Tilburg University, Faculty of Labour Law and Social Security Law, TU

The European Union has successfully completed its biggest enlargement with ten new member states on the 1st of May 2004. Romania and Bulgaria have joined the European Union from the 1st of January 2007 and Turkey and Croatia have started accession negotiations last year. Besides that, the Commission has announced that accession negotiations with countries of the Western Balkans, which have successfully implemented the Stability Pact, will be started in the (near) future.

However, the new Member states, as well as the EU candidates, still face big challenges. The government administrations in these countries are in the process of adjusting their machinery in order to fully participate in the European politics. The training of government officials of the mentioned countries remains very important.

With this in mind, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has decided, to continue to sustain the Matra pre-accession instruments, including the Matra Training for European Cooperation (MTEC). The focus of the recently established MTEC training funds is not longer exclusively on pre-accession support to European integration, but much more on strategic cooperation and coalition building in the enlarged Union. The MTEC training will remain available for the candidate member states, but will gradually being phased out for the new member states.

In this brochure, you find all relevant information about the course Social Affairs/Employment, one of the courses organized under the MTEC-programme in 2007. For more information and the application forms, please visit our website www.cross-agency.nl.

EVD/CROSS, The Hague

Introduction

The government administrations of the recently acceded member states and candidate countries are fully wrapped up in the process of harmonisation and approximation of their national legislation to the 'acquis communautaire'. Government officials are faced with the tremendous challenge of dealing with the acquis and the new developments in the EU as well as simultaneously dealing with more domestically related affairs they are faced with in their daily work. In these circumstances it is very difficult for government officials to obtain all necessary knowledge concerning the acquis and European policies as well as the required skills enabling them to contribute to the social dialogue both on the national and EU level.

In this MTEC course the Clingendael Institute, the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) and Tilburg University have joined forces and have designed a comprehensive and intensive programme to fully acquaint government officials with EU law in the area of social and employment policy. In addition it is very important that the acceded member states and candidate countries learn how to translate EU-law to their national contexts. Participants will be instructed by lecturers who are fully familiar with the implementation of EU-law in all EU-countries and who do not adhere to a one-country approach. In addition to this general approach lecturers will acquaint the participants with the experiences from the present Dutch approach to employment and economic matters. This will give an interesting contrast to the problems found in their own countries and will counterbalance the radical market approach that is often promoted by other experts.

The supervisors and experts are fully aware of the fact that only sharing their knowledge and experiences with the participants will not be sufficient in itself. The participants should also be able to apply this knowledge in practice. For this purpose a skills development programme is integrated. This will give the participants the opportunity to apply theory to practical problems found in their own country.

In the programme experts who have ample experience in giving similar courses in the acceded and candidate countries and who have done research in these countries will instruct the participants. The consortium is able to provide a highly qualified teaching staff, internationally recognised as experts in their field and fluent in English.

Objectives of the course

The main objectives are:

- Preparing the participants in handling the implementation of the 'acquis communautaire' in the field of social affairs and employment;
- Developing skills and attitude necessary to play an active role in the development of national and European social policies.

By participating in this programme, the participants will:

- Gain more practical knowledge and insight in the specific roles of different actors and institutions in the decision making and legislative procedures in the EU, especially in the field of social affairs and employment policy;
- Gain more in-depth and topical knowledge on the 'acquis communautaire' in the field of social and employment policy;

- Get acquainted with the Dutch ‘Poldermodel’ as a national example of social and economic policy making;
- Develop skills necessary for the adequate implementation of EU law and the adaptation to the European socio-political culture;
- Develop general skills such as (international) negotiating, teamwork, making a SWOT analysis and presentation techniques.

Structure and contents of the course programme

The programme of the course consists of five different parts:

1/ General introduction to the EU, the social acquis and the enlargement process

In this first part of the course the following topics will be dealt with:

- Development of social and employment policy in the EU;
- International organisation(s) in the field of social affairs and employment;
- The institutional framework of the EU and the Treaties;
- Human Rights in the EU;
- Policy co-ordination in EU affairs;
- Introduction to the ‘acquis communautaire’ in the field of social affairs and employment.

2/ ‘Acquis communautaire’ in the field of social affairs and employment

In this part of the programme all different aspects of the acquis will be studied in detail. Not only the legislation but also the implementation and jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice will be integrated.

- Social security;
- Labour law;
- Emancipation policy and equal treatment of men and women;
- Health and safety;
- Pensions;
- Free movement of persons;
- Qualifications;
- Employment policy: European, regional and national level;
- Social dialogue and partnerships.

3/ The Dutch ‘Poldermodel’, as a national example of social and economic policy making with influence on the social dialogue within the EU

- Introduction to all aspects of the model;
- Discussion on its external influence in the EU;
- Working visits to social partners.

4/ Skills development programme

The skills development programme is an integral part of the above-named content-related parts of the programme. In the skills development programme special attention is paid to:

- (Inter-)national negotiations;
- Strategic Management;

- Presentation techniques;
- Writing a policy paper.

5/ Social programme

The building of a network and friendships is an important aspect of the course. We are thinking of the following activities:

- Boat trip through the canals of Amsterdam;
- Drinks and dinner at the Conference venue;
- Sightseeing tour by coach through The Hague and its surroundings;
- Excursion to a National Employment Project.

Working methods

- Individual study;
- Preparatory homework assignment;
- Lectures with ample room for questions and discussion;
- Individual and group assignments;
- Panel discussions;
- Working visits;
- Simulation on international negotiations;
- Case studies and practical examples.

As can be concluded from the above-mentioned list, the methods of conveying knowledge will work both ways. The lectures, working groups and panel discussions will all have an interactive approach. This approach is chosen to meet one of the main didactical objectives of the programme: learning from each other and sharing experiences.

Besides discussion on theoretical problems much attention is given to practical situations during the working visits, the case studies and the simulation. By ways of self-study, individual and group assignments and the Internet training, the participant will be enabled to expand his/her individual knowledge and skills.

The participants will be given one substantial individual assignment to work on during their stay in The Netherlands. In this assignment they will be asked to write a commentary on the national employment plans of the EU Members in the context of the European employment policy and to formulate the lessons learned for their own country.

Teaching staff

The teaching staff will consist of:

- Academic staff members from the Clingendael Institute;
- Academic lecturers from the AIAS;
- Academic lecturers from Tilburg University;

Representatives from employers organisations and trade unions, government officials, senior officials from the European Commission and others.

Learning materials

- Book: F. Pennings; *Introduction to European social security law*
- Several readers and lecture sets: (e.g.) reader with the programme and background articles, reader with the consolidated versions of the treaties on the EU and the reader “Living in the Netherlands”
- List of relevant Internet sites
- CD-rom, with all learning materials (to be distributed at the end of the course)

Organisation, co-ordination and evaluation

The co-ordinator, Mr. Rob Boudewijn and project-assistant Ankie In den Kleef from the Clingendael Institute will be responsible for the overall organisation and implementation of the programme as well as all financial matters.

The course will be evaluated both verbally as well as in writing. During the final session of the course, all participants will receive an official course certificate.

Participants

The target group consists of 50 government officials and policy-makers of non-governmental organisations from the new member states and candidate countries, all working in the field of social affairs and employment. The eligible countries are: Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Because of the diverse composition of the target group in terms of nationality, culture, working experience, and knowledge of European social and employment policies, it will be necessary to acquire deeper insight into the specific working backgrounds and expectations of the individual participants as far as the programme is concerned. Therefore a questionnaire will be sent to all participants in which they are asked to formulate their specific learning objectives, to give an overview of their knowledge and training in the field of European social policy, to explain the problems they encounter with the EU acquis in their work, etc. This information will be used to fine tune the provisional course programme, adequately instruct the lecturers and thus optimally meet the specific training needs of the individual participant.

Since a group consisting of 50 individuals is too big for interactive didactical working methods, most of the time the group will be split up into two groups of 25 persons. The course will provide the participants with the unique opportunity to exchange views and experiences with each other and with academics and other experts in the field of social security and employment issues.

They will be able to discuss the challenges and constraints of the enlargement in relation to this area and find ways to improve and smoothen the process of approximation. These discussions will surely be interesting and beneficial to all parties involved. New networks of government officials and experts in the field of social affairs will be established amongst the new member states and the candidate countries themselves as well as in The Netherlands.

Dates

The course will be held at a hotel in or around The Hague and, partly, at the Clingendael Institute in The Hague from April 16th through May 4th, 2007.

Fees and accommodation

The Dutch government pays for all costs (travel to and within the Netherlands, board and lodging, visa and insurance, the course itself and study materials). Lunch and coffee/tea during the courses are organised; dinners are taken care of as far as possible. For additional costs the participants will be granted an amount of money.

The participants will stay in single rooms at a hotel in or around The Hague (the exact location together with the programme will be announced several weeks before the beginning of the course)

Application

Application forms should be downloaded from the website: <http://www.cross-agency.nl>.

1. Go to downloads
2. Click on application form for the relevant course
3. Click on your country; you can then download the application form.

Applications (duly signed by the applicant and his or her employer) should be submitted before the **16th of March 2007**, through the Royal Dutch Embassy in the applicants' country. By this date, all forms, including the signed employer statement, must be received by the Royal Netherlands Embassy. Please note that the application instructions on the website need to be followed carefully.

Only fully documented applications will be considered. The total number of applicants will be limited to 50. Admission will be on a competitive basis.

Applicants who have been accepted for the course are expected to duly attend. In case of no-shows or (too) late cancellations (i.e. within 3 weeks before the course commences) the course organiser has the right to claim the costs incurred, e.g. pre-paid tickets, from the candidate's employer.

After the deadline, it will take approximately two weeks to perform the selection procedure.

Project team and co-ordinator

The project team consists of:

Mr R. Boudewijn (Clingendael Institute, project team-leader);
Ms A.M.J. In den Kleef (Clingendael Institute, project-assistent);
Dr. M.J.S.M. van der Meer (Co-ordinator for AIAS);
Prof. Dr. F. Pennings (Co-ordinator for Tilburg University).

Description of the Consortium Members

The Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael

The Clingendael Institute is an independent, non-profit, academic Institute situated in The Hague, specialising in policy-making in the field of international relations. The Institute manages an annual budget of around ten million euros, a little fewer than half of which is in the form of subsidies from the Netherlands Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence. Its main activities are carried out in four thematic programmes and in the unit External Affairs. The Clingendael European Studies Programme (CESP) develops, unites and disseminates topical expertise on European Union policy issues. Its research focuses on the political and administrative context of the European Union, the borders of the EU, current internal and external EU policy developments and the position of The Netherlands in the enlarging Union. The training programmes are specifically geared to the needs of its clients, in particular government officials working on European Affairs. Through its wide national and international networks both in academia and in policymaking, CESP bring together expertise to guarantee the quality of its research and training programmes. CESP also stimulates public and academic debate on European Union issues by organising conferences and seminars, as well as through its publications and contributions in the media.

Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies, University of Amsterdam

The Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) is an interdisciplinary academic institute in which researchers in the fields of labour economics, labour relations, education and training, labour law, occupational health, health law, work and organisational and labour sociology pool their expertise. The institute is active in both education and research. The institute originated from the idea to stimulate and expand interdisciplinary co-operation concerning labour studies amongst and between researchers, participant institutes and academic faculties at the University of Amsterdam.

The AIAS is run by a number of leading academics at the University of Amsterdam, who contribute to research and education in the area of advanced labour studies. Labour studies address a broad range of issues associated with paid and unpaid work in society, at both a national and international level. Key elements relate to the significance of work for the individual, labour organisations and society at large.

Tilburg University

The Department of Labour Law and Social Security of Tilburg University consists of 15 members. The main objective of the department is to study and teach European labour law and social security law in relation to national law. This objective has been realised during the past decades and has led to a huge number of publications on European labour law and social security law. These are both of an introductory nature as well as of a more specialist type. In addition the department developed several courses, both in Dutch and English on topics of European law.

Information and course organisation

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More information on the courses developed under the MTEC programme

For further information, please check the website www.cross-agency.nl, or contact EVD/CROSS:

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