



“Contribution of Trade Union Organisations to the Evaluation of the Actions Conducted and their Impact in Terms of the European Employment Strategy”¹

Third report on the contribution of trade union organisations in:

- Germany
- Austria
- Spain
- Hungary
- Luxembourg
- The Netherlands
- Poland
- Slovenia

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0. Warning

The member trade unions in the ETUC in the 25 Member States of the European Union have been asked to participate in a common project for the intermediate evaluation of the European employment strategy. The central points of interest were the effectiveness of the reformed European employment strategy (EES), the role of the trade unions in the latter – in particular in the 'National Action Plan process' – and proposals for the additional improvement of the social dialogue geared to employment. On that subject, some questionnaires, of which the analysis was to constitute an introduction for three workshops, had been sent out and these were supposed to cover the member trade unions in various countries. The workshops were intended to be made up in such a way that the presence of trade unions from the 'old' and 'new' Member States and the countries with a varied socio-economic background delivered the widest possible fund of experience.

Those invited to the 3rd workshop, held on 7 and 8 March 2005 in Budapest, were the members trade unions from Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Hungary. Only the questionnaires completed by Germany, Luxembourg, Poland and Spain had arrived before the start of the workshop. This has not changed in the meantime. Representatives from Luxembourg, Poland, Spain and Hungary participated in the workshop.

That is why the basis of information for this report remains slender.

1. Introduction

The problem posed after the 2nd workshop in Malta can be framed by way of an introduction as follows:

The central difficulty is that what we are faced with is a *system on several levels*, with which the trade unions have to deal actively and constructively. It is thus a question of the *mutual influence* of the policy for employment: at the European level vis-à-vis the national level, and at the national level vis-à-vis the European level.

Simultaneously, there is another associated problem at several levels: namely, between the trade unions, the social partners and the Commission at the European level and the trade unions, the social partners and the governments at the national levels. This is further complicated by the fact that we are dealing with 25 different countries and thus with 25 different economic, social, organisational and political realities.

Consequently, one question has proved to be *decisive* in the two previous workshops:

How can the unions – because of the problem mentioned at several levels – use the EES effectively in order to bring about progress proper to the policy for employment in all countries, for the sake of the workers?

As early as the 1st workshop in Riga, this was obvious:

In that sense, the EES can play a progressive role only if it is boosted by the national discussions on the policy adapted for employment and their impact at the European level *and* if it is negotiated also at the European level with due hearings. The trade unions should thus succeed, in the interaction between a national and a European discussion, in obtaining a type of *alternative mainstreaming* vis-à-vis the current policy on employment, and in so doing, utilise the possibilities for alliances which are present in a differentiated way, with the employers and the governments. The central question remains: how to achieve this?

The question 'How can the EES be utilised for real progress, proper to the employment policy *everywhere, thus: in all the Member States?*' should be the *guiding question* for the conference in Budapest, and should equally be the one for which the answers to the questionnaires need to be studied.

2. For the European Employment Strategy (EES) and the objectives proper to the EU's employment policy

(1st passage in the discussion and questions 9 – 14 in the questionnaire)

First of all, we should evaluate the development of the European instruments, primarily with regard to their functions as 'references' for the respective national levels. The contributions of the participating countries demonstrated first of all that it is very difficult to evaluate the instruments while disregarding the content that they 'carry'. For this reason, there will be not only an assessment of the reformed EES process, but also an evaluation of the aims and criteria proper to the employment policy coming from the EU to the Member States. In general, we can say that the reformed procedures are welcomed in terms of their principle, even if their effective realisation is still lagging behind. As to the aims and criteria proper to the employment policy, all the moves contributing to the *promotion* of the potential of staff, and more particularly *the professional activity of women*, are judged positively.

What is constantly criticised remains the overly great *focus on the supply* of the aims and criteria proper to the employment policy, and their excessive deregulatory thrust. This would lead in particular in countries with governments, which in any case often tend to pursue a 'neoliberal orientation', to a net reinforcement of the liberal positions centred on the market. Measures for the direct creation of employment would have been neglected. The evaluation of the reformed EES thus remains above all ambiguous because the trade unions cannot ignore the political orientations and aims which are conveyed by this procedure for all the procedural improvements.

The fact that the 'synchronisation' between the European and national timetables is positive is emphasised in both Germany and Spain (*UGT*). But in parallel, the Spanish explain (*CCOO*) that the synchronisation intended there would not have been put into practice until now: the deliberations on the National Action Plan would have taken place only after the deliberations on the budget; the Spanish parliament would not have been consulted on the National Action Plan. Some elements in the aims proper to the employment policy are judged positively, for example from the Spanish side, and above all, the increase in the professional activity of women. The basic general orientation on the supply is criticised by both Luxembourg (*CGT-L/LCGB*) and Spain (*CCOO*), and more particularly by Germany (*DGB*). The accentuation of employability, the Spanish argue, would, in the framework of a basic orientation concentrating on the supply, make the individual responsible above all solely for

himself; the principle being propagated, of 'making work pay', would thus run counter to useful measures, as the Germans observe. In addition, the German system of differentiated collective bargaining agreements would be widely ignored. For Luxembourg, we note that there would be a recovery through national measures, such as the raising of the retirement age and other deregulatory initiatives, which, however, would be reflected by the objectives proper to the EU's employment policy. On this point there are also calls, from there, for the basic orientations of the existing employment policy of the EU to be corrected.

For the reply to the question on the evaluation of the role of the trade unions in the definition and 'follow-up' of the EES, what we find is that those who address the European level consider that the role of the trade unions is not sufficiently strong and important there. In Spain, trade union influence at the European level is deemed to be unsatisfactory, with room for improvement (*CCOO*), and it should also be noted, when it comes to the evaluation (*UGT*), Luxembourg wants a stronger and more offensive role and Germany (*DGB*) wants to see formal participation by the unions in the 'EES process' at the European level. This reflects, as we have seen during the workshop, primarily the criticism of the central orientations proper to the employment policy, as they are conveyed by the EES process. But what remains uncertain on this point is how a stronger and more assured role by the trade unions can be secured in the general EES process at the European level.

The answers to the question of the positive and negative impacts of the EES on the various fields of national policy again underscore the ambiguity with which the trade unions consider the *predominant policy for employment of the EU* and thus, ipso facto, the need to draw stronger inspiration from it, which brings changes. The negative aspects relate mainly to the political criteria and orientations, the positive aspects – as already mentioned – to those areas where there is a question of the promotion of the potential of the workers and procedural improvements. Luxembourg has a negative opinion of the fact that the EES reinforces the national policy towards greater flexibility and the previous rules on early retirement; there are similar criticisms in Germany to the effect that there would be no balance between flexibility and security; in Spain, the UGT reports that there would be growing

pressure on unemployment benefits and there is criticism of the fact that the EU's recommendations, with their liberal orientation, focused on the market, would not be sufficiently suited to the Spanish reality and its demands. Germany (*DGB*) also criticises the fact that the reformed EES would bring with it 'too many reporting obligations'. By way of positive results, we have these: there is an emphasis on the importance of education and training, the participation of women in paid activity would be encouraged, or more account would be taken of the inequality of women; several countries link an improvement in the employment market service at least indirectly to the EES (Luxembourg, Spain and Poland as well).

As to the procedures, people are stressing positively that there would now be a broader concrete aspect to the aims, a new timetable and intermediate aims, as well as the durability of the directives, which would ultimately allow for better planning and also – as Spain stresses – better co-ordination between the employment policy of the nation State and that of the autonomous Communities.

The criticism from Poland (*Solidarnosc*) on the other hand is levelled not at the EES, its aims and instruments, but exclusively at its *realisation by the Polish government*, which is rated as completely inadequate. Above all, it is the complete absence of a system of supervision that is stressed. All in all, this position has also been adopted in the workshops in Budapest by the representatives of the *Hungarian trade unions*. This was a repetition of a 'structure' which was already characteristic of the first two workshops: the new Member States first and foremost criticise the – still? – inadequate national implementation of the EES, which as a general rule goes hand in hand with a – still? – weakly organised role for the trade unions. The exclusively positive and very interested position of the trade unions in the new Member States comes from the fact – as they have explained – that with the national realisation of the EES *comes the creation of only the first elements in a systematic and transparent policy for employment and assured consultation methods*. On this point, the emotional content of the interpretation of the EES for the trade unions in the 'old' Member States is very different from what it means for the new Member States. Thus we see the simultaneous raising of the fundamental questions of European trade union solidarity which ran through the three workshops like a Leitmotiv.

The responses to the question whether or not the *National Action Plans* cover the European directives are a function of this. From the point of view of Poland (*Solidarnosc*) there is a repetition of the severe criticism of the lack of national realisation, which reaches a climax in the fact that the decisions by the European Council in July 2003 would not have been taken into consideration; from the point of view of Spain, too, criticism is voiced regarding the adaptation, above all, in terms of the 2004 plan, more particularly with regard to the budgetary resources made available and for the operationalisation of the aims. Now we should observe how, after the political change in Spain, the new government handles the EES. From the point of view of Luxembourg and Germany, we find the directives in the National Action Plans; in Germany, the DGB would have proposed changes to the government, which would have been partially taken into consideration.

The *DGB* also thinks that even the *work programme of the European social partners* would have had repercussions in the German National Action Plan. Both Poland and Spain adopt a critical attitude on this score: from the Polish point of view (*Solidarnosc*) only the very first steps towards improving mobility would have been made, with regard to the government's '50plus' programme there would be no evaluation, with regard to undeclared work there would be far too many grey areas, the regions would not have been reinforced, in fact on the contrary many charges would have been transferred, stemming from the extremely high unemployment, to the municipal level.

From the *Spanish point of view*, the National Action Plans continue to lag behind both the European directives and the common work programme of the social partners. Excessive limited-term work would not have been particularly limited in an effective way, with regard to the professional activity of women and the employment of older people, there would be a considerable need for action; so far, there would not have been effective efforts directed at combating the regional and social differences. On the other hand, in 2003, a framework agreement would have been successfully concluded between the employers' associations and the unions with reference to the aims proper to the European employment policy whose principles appear successively in the various negotiations of collective bargaining agreements.

More particularly, the last example shows that the ways in which the unions take up a position in conceptual and practical terms vis-à-vis the European employment strategy and its national adaptation, the '*National Action plan process*', are completely different from one Member State to another. For example, whereas the German side (*DGB*) is saying explicitly that the National Action Plan falls under the responsibility of the government, and that is why the trade unions would only have to put forward proposals for changes – which in this case have been partially taken on board – the Spanish trade unions are obviously looking for a greater influence by concluding autonomous agreements with the employers, which reflect on the aims of the European employment strategy. From the Polish and Hungarian point of view, an appropriate adaptation of the EES would be an important or even central basis for a stronger national employment policy, determined on a consultation basis – however, in both countries the role of the unions in the NAP process remains to be built up, more particularly because until now, it has not proved possible to secure any agreement with the employers' associations on any form of social dialogue proper to the policy for employment.

What is interesting at this stage is not so much the differences themselves as the fact that they exist. For this raises a certain number of problems and questions: what is the value of the references of the EES for the trade unions in the Member States? What importance is attached to the procedure and the instruments, and what importance to the (political) orientations and criteria being conveyed? When it comes to the importance of the EES for the unions in the various Member States, what we have at the end of this passage is the following paradoxical impression – taking account of the results of the two other workshops: in the new Member States, the trade unions consider the EES as a central instrument, in order to achieve at the national level a systematic and transparent process proper to the employment policy. For this reason, they must, and want to, consent to this process – more particularly in the old socialist countries – but they have too little influence to be able to co-organise the fundamental aims and orientations in an effective way. As the EES and the national governments collaborate frequently regarding the 'principal liberal current, centred on the market', the trade unions are faced with an ambiguity between 'formal progress' and the 'trend towards deregulation' proper to the

employment policy. In the 'old' Member States – more particularly in those where there is an ancient tradition of influential trade unions – there now seems to be a policy which avoids this ambiguity by relativizing the importance of the EES for the national employment policy, and where efforts are made to functionalise the positive impacts and neutralise the negative effects. That still leaves the question of whether such relativizing and selective relations are firstly really promising, and secondly whether they contribute to a more positive organisation of the EES, because in this way, the greater influence enjoyed there by the trade unions 'evaporates' in the European space. There are only a few examples, such as Spain in the 3rd workshop, within which the trade unions are trying to use their considerable influence, which has increased with the social dialogue, in order to follow as closely as possible behind the EES and the national strategy for employment and thus to organise a real European dimension.

3. The 'National Action Plan process'

A series of questions would concern the role that the trade unions have played during its preparation, its setting in place and its evaluation and during its *follow-up*. Thus it is assumed that the representation with regard to the NAPs was not to constitute a single interaction, but a more or less regulated and transparent 'National Action Plan process'. In addition, it is significant for its political value to know how it is linked globally to the national employment policy and forms an integral part thereof, or represents no more than a rather peripheral 'European obligatory exercise'. For the trade unions, it is necessary to clarify in this context, whether they think it necessary to participate in the NAP, and what kind of participation they consider appropriate. The question of the *responsibility and mastery of the projects* of the NAPs is thus raised.

In the countries whose replies are available, there are variable practices in terms of the participation of the trade unions. In *Luxembourg*, the framing of the National Action Plan is inserted into the country's general tripartite institutional framework. In this way, the trade unions participate in the NAP as part of the 'Permanent Committee for Employment' (CPE) and the 'Tripartite Co-ordination Committee'

(Tripartite); the 'Consultative Committee on Professional Training' (CCFP) participates as well. Moreover, the trade unions participate in the government delegation, which represents the NAP in Brussels. The tripartite committees are also the forum in which the discussions are held on the recommendations formulated by the European Commission. The *Spanish trade unions*, on the other hand, criticise the fact that they would not have been consulted until the last phase in the framing of the NAP (CCOO). As a reaction to this, the social partners have suggested to the government the improvement of the whole 'National Action Plan process' and the development of a corresponding working method on this score.

Until now, the trade unions in Spain have not been consulted in the discussions on the recommendations by the Commission and the decisions on their national utilisation (CCOO). They are still waiting for a discussion in the framework of the social dialogue (UGT). The replies from *Germany* (DGB) indicate that the DGB deems the consultations carried out by the federal government to be appropriate and adequate: 'The DGB has drafted an exhaustive position paper on the draft NAP with examples for actions by the social partners on their own and jointly, which have been partially taken on board'. And: 'The participation in the framing of the NAP is appropriate from the point of view of the DGB. As the framing belongs to (is the responsibility of ... ?) the federal government, the DGB considers that it is not incumbent upon it itself to provide contributions of texts, with the exception of the activities of the social partners'. In addition, the social partners would be invited partly to participate in the consultations between the European Commission and the federal government. In *Poland*, little room has so far been given to the trade unions in the NAP process, which, globally, is not yet regulated and not transparent (Solidarnosc). According to the first information, the NAP was on the agenda for the tripartite Commission, although no consensus was actually achieved. The principal committee competent for employment was not working during the period concerned (in the autumn of 2004); when it did then meet in December, the plan had already been adopted by the government. From the point of view of the union (Solidarnosc), the global procedure is marked by a significant lack of *trust and a predominance of confrontation to the detriment of a culture of co-operation*. At the Budapest workshop, the representatives from Poland and Hungary once again stressed the

fundamental importance represented by the NAP process for them, because it imposes on the national governments a minimum of system and transparency, and, in any case, a rudimentary consultation with the social partners.

4. Union actions and initiatives

In the context of the 'National Action Plan process', a question had been raised as to what actions and initiatives had been undertaken by the social partners, or also with others, to promote the central approaches of the 'Common work programme of the European social partners for employment'. Here, it is thus expressly a matter of the *interaction* between the European level and the national level: the national actions and initiatives of the social partners, in the context of the European common work programme, are consequently geared to the respective national situations. But simultaneously, their aim is to bring to life the European work programme and to produce reference examples stemming from good practice. *Luxembourg* and *Germany* remark that on this subject, a European reporting system would have been drawn up, the joint national fiche for the report on social partner actions on Employment in Member States, and that this gives many examples of actions; in *Germany* (DGB), moreover, they stress the exemplary projects of the DGB 'Demographic change' and 'Equal opportunities', and refer to many collective bargaining agreements and company agreements designed to provide job security.

From the point of view of *Poland* (Solidarnosc), they point to a series of initiatives and activities: however, it must be stressed that it is not a matter here of common social partners, but of *trade union initiatives*. What is characteristic in this context is that it is partly a question of *self-help activities*, which the union makes available to the persons concerned.

Trade union initiatives in Poland

- *Solidarnosc stresses the following initiatives as being particularly important:*
- *support for the employment service for the development of standards for services;*

- *fight for the guarantee of early retirement payments;*
- *initiatives for the support of regions which are particularly threatened by unemployment and the economic crisis;*
- *demand for reinforced resources for an active employment policy – fight against undeclared work;*
- *training.*

One particularly important initiative is:

- *the Guaranteed Worker's Benefits Fund, which is used to save jobs.*

Solidarnosc stresses the following self-help activities:

- *20 permanent union staff are available for any questions relating to employment;*
- *own offers of insurance for unemployed people;*
- *organisation of many 'job clubs';*
- *minders for the children of unemployed people.*

The *Spanish trade unions* (UGT & CCOO) highlight a series of activities and initiatives deriving from or supported by the *social partners* and which seek to add dynamism to the field of action proper to the employment policy. These activities and initiatives translate in a remarkable way the developments within the EES, including the themes resulting from the European dialogue between the social partners.

The following initiatives and activities are particularly stressed in Spain:

- in the field of 'equal opportunities between the sexes', the social partners have developed some common criteria for the promotion of equal opportunities in

the collective bargaining agreements. In 2003 they jointly published some 'General considerations and examples of good practice' in that area and in early 2004, they staged a common conference;

- some proposals have been made for the improvement of the operation of the public *employment* services, more particularly with regard to their decentralisation following the new employment law;
- in the field of the promotion of professional training for employees, Spain has a long common tradition among the social partners;
- for the International Disabled Day in 2003, the social partners adopted a common declaration for the inclusion of that category of persons in the employment context;
- in 2004, the social partners and the government signed a common 'Charter for social dialogue for competitiveness, stability of employment and social cohesion', designed to favour Spain's future economic development, while at the same time improving the quality of employment, social protection, territorial cohesion and environmental sustainability;
- recently, an agreement between the government and the social partners was signed, in connection with the new 'Law on Aliens' on the integration of migrants into the employment market.

It needs to be stressed that Spain has continuous initiatives to embed the objectives proper to the employment policy, deriving from the European employment strategy and its discussion among the social partners, into *collective bargaining agreements*. To that end, use is made of the instrument of the *framework agreement*:

Framework collective bargaining agreement in Spain

The Spanish unions emphasise that the framework collective bargaining agreements have become the mirror of the EES and the common European work programme by the social partners:

This is the Acuerdo Interconfederal para la Negociación Colectiva, concluded in 2002, a framework agreement for the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements, signed by the unions UGT and CCOO and the employers' associations CEOE and CEPYME. The objective of this agreement is to provide some common criteria in all the collective bargaining agreements, irrespective of their field of application, whether at the national, regional, provincial or company level, for the following fields: wage policy, employment and organisation of employment contracts, flexibility, professional training, equality of treatment in the workplace, equal opportunities between the sexes, health and safety in the workplace. Provision is also made for some fundamental criteria in the European framework agreement between the EES (ETUC) and UNICE regarding distance working.

5. Does the European employment strategy reinforce the national trade unions in their policy for employment and in the social dialogue?

From the point of view of the trade unions in *Luxembourg* (CGT-L&LCGB), on the question whether the European employment strategy has reinforced the national trade unions in their own efforts concerning employment policy, the answer is a very clear Yes. The EES has promoted the creation of the Permanent Employment Committee and reinforced the role of the trade unions. On the other hand, the trade unions have got into an awkward position by the very fact of their point of view regarding these questions – for example on retirement policy – in which they represent a diverging conception. On the social dialogue as such, however, the EES has no impact because it was already, and independently of that, institutionalised in an established way in Luxembourg. The Germans (DGB) write of the influence of the EES and its principles for employment: 'They have no influence on the political priorities of the DGB'. There is a more particular reference to the fact that there are

reports drafted with regard to the central field of action of wage policy, which fall within the responsibility of the member trade unions in the DGB. The many working relations between the DGB and the employers' associations (and which can be perceived also as social dialogues in the broad sense), exist *independently* of the EES, according to what the DGB says. On this point, the EES has no particular impact on employment policy and the social dialogue in Germany. It should be perceived rather as one of the partial tasks regularly taken into consideration. From the point of view of the *Spanish trade unions*, the EES has provided a considerable boost to the national employment policy and various influences on wage agreements. Moreover, it has been behind a common declaration by the social partners and the government on the 'Social dialogue 2004, competitiveness, stability of employment and social cohesion'. The trade unions recognise that the EES has deepened the social dialogue already existing before, and introduced some reinforced common commitments (CCOO). But this report can also be accentuated from another point of view: the fact that there was already a pre-existing tradition of social dialogue in Spain now facilitates the intelligent utilisation of the EES (UGT). From the Polish point of view (Solidarnosc), this is an important support for the trade union fight for a social market economy; there is the hope that the social dialogue, too, will be reinforced in the future by these methods.

6. Recommendations

The following 'recommendations' are a sort of summary of the different discussions conducted in the workshops in Riga, Malta and Budapest. The – few – recommendations formulated explicitly as replies to the questionnaires by the national trade unions have also been inserted. At the end of this paragraph they (reproduce) focus on the questions which were to provide the structure for the discussions at the workshop in Budapest.

Defending the European Employment Strategy (EES) by applying it

Some recommendations

- The establishment, advice, decision-making and evaluation of the National Action Plans (NAPs) – *establishing the NAP process* – as an important field in the national employment strategy.
- Effectively communicating between the European Employment Strategy (EES) as a central plank in the Lisbon strategy and the European social dialogue.
- For the trade unions: with regard to the social partners and for our own attitude vis-à-vis the EES and the NAPs: practising *critical responsibility!*
- For the trade unions: with regard to the orientations of the European employment policy, organising an alternative mainstreaming!

These four central recommendations summarise the various proposals which have been made in the course of the three workshops and which are in part mutually exclusive.

The internal link between these four central recommendations is rendered accessible if we take another careful look at the exchange of experiences across the three workshops. This is how it looks: there are, in the various Member States, not only different arrangements for tackling it because of the NAP process, but also: *in the various Member States, the unions attach entirely varying degrees of importance to the NAP process (and thus the EES) for national employment policy.* To put it more simply, one might say, where the exception always confirms the rule:

In the countries with a long, well-developed tradition of an employment policy and social dialogue, less importance is attached to the EES/NAP than in the countries where it is only via the EES/NAP that a more systematic and transparent employment strategy is created and where the social partners ultimately get an assured, albeit often inadequate role in this process. At first sight, it would seem that in certain Member States, more particularly among the most recent ones to have joined the European Union, the trade unions depend more on the EES/NAP than in others. Those which consider the EES/NAP as a very important element for the national policy simultaneously draw attention to the ambivalence of this instrument: although

it delivers greater system and transparency and the recognition of the role of the social partners, it also simultaneously provides political orientations, which are strongly angled towards supply. This criticism of the dominant orientation of the EES is also shared by all.

Those who urgently need the EES/NAPs for the reinforcement of the national employment policy and the role of the trade unions/social partners find it particularly urgent for this reason to bring about corrections to the dominant orientation angled to supply and the deregulation of the EES, especially when they are often dealing with governments which take up an even more pronounced neoliberal position. Those who particularly urgently need a reorientation and potentialisation of the EES are simultaneously too weak to push it through; they need the solidarity of the others. Only if those who are stronger by virtue of a tradition and roots make the EES, and consequently the NAP, litigious in their countries, and if this becomes a strong position at the European level towards an alternative type of mainstreaming, does the prospect of a correction appear. But as the appeals for solidarity get lost, if they remain just abstract, the consequence can only be to enhance the value of the *NAP process in all* the Member States so that it becomes the central field of the national employment policy and does not become only an additional and fragmentary relation towards Europe. On this subject, the *European system at several levels* needs to be served also by the unions in a strategic and intelligent fashion.

Against this background, the four central recommendations are thus linked as follows:

The national *NAP process* needs to be expanded, inserted into the social dialogue and become an important and *controversial* part of the national employment policy – in all the Member States (1st recommendation). In order for the European system at several levels to be able to operate also for the employment policy, we thus need to find know-hows examining the different positions concerning employment policy, the compromises which are got while « sending » to the European level the open and controversial issues in a process of retroaction. But this will be really useful only when at the European level, the EES process itself is better realised and closely tied

to the social dialogue (2nd recommendation). On the two levels, this presupposes a practical attitude by the social partners and more particularly the trade unions, which might be termed *critical responsibility*. This means not leaving the NAP process as a European system at several levels to the governments, but demanding a status as co-author albeit including the fact that no heads be buried in the sand vis-à-vis the controversies, but that the latter be rendered transparent (this means: *critical responsibility*) (3rd recommendation). After all, the trade unions cannot make do with playing this constructive and critical role within the EES/NAP process, but they must worry about how to reinforce their own convictions and basic demands proper to the employment policy more than in the past. So they have no option but to organise, in parallel with the EES/NAP process, and in chronological order inserted within it, an autonomous process, linking the various European levels of the alternative mainstreaming (4th recommendation).

These reflections led to the *Structuring guiding questions* for the 3rd workshop in Budapest, which are mentioned in conclusion once again below:

Guiding questions:

How to transform the EES into a benefit for all the unemployed people and employed people in all the Member States?

How can the trade unions, by acting successfully in the European system on several levels, develop an alternative mainstreaming vis-à-vis the policy focusing on the predominant supply?

Questions in context 1 (in the questionnaire 9-14):

What importance do we attach as trade unions to the EES

- *for the procedures?*
- *for the subjects to be debated and recommendations?*

How do we want to perceive the EES:

- *as a complementary instrument?*
- *as principles for commitment?*
- *as a strong orientation to be negotiated?*

Questions in context 2 (summary 15-17):

What is the context of the NAP compared to the national employment policy?

From the point of view of the trade unions: What role should the NAP take over in the framework of the global national employment policy?

What importance should the NAP have in the framework of the global national employment policy?

What 'responsibility' do we want vis-à-vis the NAP?

Questions in context 3 (summary 19 + 20):

What needs to be 'retroacted' at the national level at the European level (feedback) in order to make the EES more dynamic?

Questions in context 4 (summary 18 + 21):

What needs to happen to get the EES to contribute to the reinforcement of the social dialogue and the trade unions in the national and European framework?