

Sustainability: what does it mean for worker representatives and working conditions in retail?

European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) and UNI Europa

Date: Tuesday, 5 June 2012

Venue: Thon Brussels City Centre, Avenue du Boulevard 17, Brussels

What does sustainability mean for workers and their representatives in the retail sector? Is sustainability reporting addressing the key concerns of workers? Can worker participation rights and framework agreements be used to make working conditions more sustainable?

Up to now the debate on company sustainability has been dominated by management and the rating agencies. The purpose of this one-day workshop is to give participants an overview of the main practices used to evaluate and report on the sustainability of working conditions in the retail sector. Best practice cases will be identified where worker representatives have used these tools in the interests of workers. Finally, a “workers’ agenda” for influencing the sustainability debate to improve working conditions will be developed.

AGENDA

- 09.00 Registration
- 09.15 Introduction of the participants and purpose of the workshop (*Sigurt Vitols and Bruno Demaitre, ETUI; Fabrice Warneck, UNI Europa*)
- 09.45 **Session 1: How does company sustainability reporting work?**
An overview of sustainability reporting practices in the retail industry (*Vitols, ETUI*)
- 11.00 Coffee Break
- 11.15 **Session 2: How can framework agreements improve working conditions?**
Presentation by *Christy Hoffman (UNI Global Deputy General Secretary)*
Moderation: *Mike Geppert (University of Surrey)*
- 12.30 Lunch
- 14.00 **Session 3: How does a rating agency analyse working conditions in retail?**
Presentation by *Jan Vandenhove (Vigeo)*
Discussion: are key worker concerns being addressed by the rating agencies?
- 15.15 Coffee break
- 15.45 **Session 4: How can we make sustainability more relevant for workers?**
Panel with EWC representatives from major European retailers
Moderation: *Demaitre (ETUI)*
- 17.00 Feedback from participants + conclusions
- 17.30 End of workshop