
Social Dialogue in the Active Leisure Sector (DIAL)

To encourage continued growth and entrepreneurship in the active leisure sector (fitness and outdoors) it is important for there to be sound industrial relations and understanding between employers and workers. It is important to promote consensus building and involvement among the main stakeholders in the world of work through a process which is known as social dialogue.

Evidence over the past 50 years has shown that EU-level social dialogue can play an essential role in delivering benefits for employers, workers, and for the economy and society as a whole.

The European Commission is funding some development work to help establish discussions, consultations, negotiations and joint actions between employers and employees through a new process of social dialogue for the active leisure sector. The focus of this development during 2014 is to get more employers aware of the importance of social dialogue and to identify some key areas of industrial concerns at both national and European levels.

These topics may cover, for example, the setting of pay and employment conditions through collective bargaining at various levels, expressing opinions to governments and other public authorities through consultations (and helping to shape law and policy in areas such as employment), jointly managing or overseeing areas such as social security, training and qualifications, or health and safety, or simply discussing issues of mutual interest.

In the active leisure sector there are an estimated 80,000 businesses and over 500,000 workers, and given the size of the sector, it is surprising to find that it is fragmented and under-represented by both employer and employee organisations and that there is little current activity in industrial relations. The DIAL project which is managed by EHFA, will start to strengthen, build and develop social dialogue into an effective force for the active leisure sector.

What is going to happen?

The main aim of this project is going to be building recognition and understanding with employers and their representative groups which is called “capacity building” in at least 14 different EU states*. By the end of the DIAL project, EHFA will have created a research base from which it will have brought together employers who understand the concept and importance of social dialogue with the aim of establishing national actions and areas of importance in industrial relations. This capacity building is of great importance because the active leisure sector is so fragmented so the organised meetings of employers will start to bring some structure and purpose to build into a European agenda.

In 2012, EHFA confirmed its recognition of social dialogue as an integral part of its programme for work and subsequently supported the establishment of a new, non-for-profit association called EHFA-Employers (EHFA-E). The purpose of EHFA-E being to act as a representative for employers at both national and EU levels.

EHFA will work in cooperation with the European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (EC-OE) to develop and deliver on its objectives under the DIAL project.

*The countries currently involved with the programme of work are: BE, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, & UK. Employers from other countries may attend the planned meetings which will be advertised on our website.



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