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Commission consultative des mutations industrielles – CCMI



ÉPÍTÉSÜGYI MINŐSÉGELLENŐRZŐ INNOVÁCIÓS
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Hungary, Poland and Estonia – Comparison of industrial transition models

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Under the presidency of Mr. Van Iersel, President of the CCMI

The European Economic and Social Committee's "Consultative Commission for Industrial Change" and the Hungarian Construction Technology Platform organize a public hearing in Hungary, on 18 April 2008. The title of this event is "Hungary, Poland and Estonia – Comparison of industrial transition models".

Why this hearing?

This hearing is a follow-up to the hearing organized in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 7 March 2008. It is supposed to follow the same approach and to extend the scope of comparison of the transition models to other Eastern European countries, namely Hungary, Poland and Estonia. It is also supposed to capitalize and build on the message of the Ljubljana hearing.

Just as in the case of the hearing in Ljubljana, the main idea behind the organization of this hearing is to have a close look at the **development of** the economies – with particular attention to the **industrial sectors** – of Hungary, Poland and Estonia, taking also into consideration the specific points of departure of each country. How did these countries manage the transition to market economy, looking also at the drawbacks, tensions and problems experienced in the course of this transformation process? What successes and failures can they call their own, and what are the defining factors that have resulted in them? What can be learnt from each other to **manage restructuring, industrial change and transition in general** in a better manner? **Are there any best practices**, and if so, could they be exchanged, transferred from one country to another? This hearing is supposed to bring answers to these questions.

Another very important aim of the hearing is to see how EU-accession influenced the development of the economy and especially industrial changes. Therefore, the hearing will examine the **effects of preparations for EU-membership on the industrial sectors** ("before"), and it will closely look at the **developments** in the period **since** the date of **accession** ("after"). **Is there a palpable progress that can directly be linked to the EU-membership?** The "before" and "after" developments will also have to be examined **in the light of the Lisbon strategy goals**.

This second hearing won't stop at this point. Follow-up is planned either in the Ukraine and/or in Croatia, in the form of a similar hearing examining three other ex-socialist countries. A hearing in the Ukraine – where the role of industry is dominant and where structural changes are underway – might take on the role of disseminating the best practices outside the EU.

The European Economic and Social Committee will **pass on the findings its initiative to the European institutions**, namely the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament.

To ensure a thorough examination of the subject, a two-fold approach is applied in the hearing. One is academic, the other is practical. In the case of each country, one speaker will represent the academic world and at least another one a specific industrial sector – in our case the construction sector.

Academic viewpoint

The academic viewpoint is supposed to give the economic background, the overall economic policy context, the challenges and opportunities that the country's economy had to face in the course of the transformation process. The academic lecturer concentrates **on the evolution of industry, preferably with concrete examples**. He will also discourse on the **effects of preparations for EU-membership on the industrial sectors/industrial policies** ("before"), and he will closely look at the **developments** in the period **since** the date of **accession** ("after") – also in the light of the attainment of the **Lisbon strategy goals**. **Is there a palpable progress that can directly be linked to the EU-membership?**

For the European Economic and Social Committee, which is also representing the social partners on European level, it is also of high importance to know in this context what repercussions the economic (industrial) policies have had on employment and how employment policy have evolved in the industrial sector. How were human resources affected by industrial policies? Was the economic transformation managed in a socially responsible manner? Is there any key factor in the area of human resources that is crucial for a successful transition? **The academic speaker will conclude on identifying the most and the least successful characteristics of the industrial transition model of its country**. This will be the base for exchanging best practices.

Practical viewpoint

One speaker from each country will present one and the same specific industrial sector. For the sake of comparability the construction sector was chosen to give the academic viewpoint the practical touch. Attention was paid to give voice to employees and employers alike.

This speaker will specifically present the **development of the construction sector**. What went well, what went wrong? Did the sector's position and importance in the economy improve or rather decline? How did **employment** develop? How did **commercial relations** evolve with Western Europe, the rest of the world and with other previous socialist countries? The speaker also touches upon the sector's **competitiveness** compared to other countries; environmental issues and the ability of the sector to attract skilled **labour**. The speaker makes a short **evaluation of the sectoral developments during the preparatory phase of EU-membership, and since accession to EU-membership**.

Finally, this speaker concludes by **filtering out** the key factors that have lead to the sector's success or that are currently bringing fruitful results and are putting the sector on the right path. Thus **best practices** will be shared among the 3 countries.

Interactive debate

Under the presidency of Mr. Van Iersel, president of the European Economic and Social Committee's Consultative Commission on Industrial Change, the hearing will be continued through a general debate that will build on the previous lectures and in which all participants will be encouraged to contribute. This debate is supposed to identify the best practices, to debate them and to exchange further experience from the side of participants.

Summary – a message to take away

A journalist will synthesize the lectures and the general debate and she will make the formal summary of the hearing's main findings. She/He will present:

- the best practices in the field of economic-industrial policy, that could be followed by other countries as well in Eastern Europe
- the best practices in the construction sector worth being shared (possibly useful for other sectors as well).

Follow up

The European Economic and Social Committee's Consultative Commission on Industrial Change will draw up an information report on the findings of these two hearings, and this report will be transmitted to the European institutions and to a number of industrial sectors.

The hearing will possibly be followed up by a similar one in Croatia and a special one, a "missionary hearing" in the Ukraine. In the Ukraine – where the role of industry is dominant and where structural changes are underway – this missionary hearing might take on the role of disseminating the best practices outside the EU and of providing assistance to a neighbouring country.