

**The Greater Region around Luxembourg: a particular area for
industrial relations in Europe**

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July 2012

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Introduction

In Luxembourg, the share of cross-border workers amongst wage earners is enormous. As of June 30th 2011 the national statistical office “STATEC” estimated that cross-border workers represented 43.8% of all employed persons. All in all there were 152,164 cross-border workers. Amongst them, 49.4% came from France, 25.3% from Belgium and 25.3% from Germany.¹

Major agreements on employment and social security are currently being negotiated in the Tripartite coordination committee, an institution created in 1977 with representatives from the state, the employers and the trade unions. This committee was initially created to mitigate the effects of the steel crisis on employment and still exists. Those agreements are voted by the Chamber of representatives consisting of nationally elected representatives. They then become applicable to all wage earners working in Luxembourg, almost half of them being cross-border workers. Can such a governance model persist if the share of cross-border workers continues to grow or remains stable? The question is not merely a theoretical one, but well within the realm of possibilities since statistical forecasts indicate that the number of border crossers will soon exceed the number of resident workers.

The issue of labour market governance goes beyond the framework of national boundaries. After all, in the “Greater Region”² comprising Luxembourg and the regions surrounding it: Wallonia, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the French Community of Belgium, Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate and Lorraine, various institutions exist who are likely to take over a governing function in a new cross-border system of governance.

What form of governance can one conceive of for the Luxembourg labour market and industrial relations with the legal entities and institutions of the Greater Region in order to better involve the cross-border workers in such governance, knowing that they will perhaps soon make up the majority of workers in Luxembourg?

The relevance of our reflections is encapsulated in the following two questions. Isn't there a risk that Luxembourg will find itself in the situation where inside its borders a minority would end up making decisions and thereby setting itself over a majority? How could one then integrate the entire workforce in a new form of transnational governance of the industrial relations?

My article will deal with this as follows. In the first section I will present the elements illustrating the internationalisation of labour in Luxembourg. In a second section, I will attempt to see how the cross-border workers are represented in Luxembourg through social elections. In a third section, I will explain how these cross-border workers are taken into

¹ STATEC, Indicateurs rapides, série L, n°2/2011, 12 octobre 2011.

² The Greater Region comprising the territories cited above is the one of the results of a process of political cooperation initiated in 1968 between Germany and France. They were later joined by Luxembourg.

account by the trade unions. In the fourth section I will briefly take up the institutions of the Greater Region in order to see how they might eventually collaborate with each other in order to set up cross-border governance of that regionalised market. In the fifth and the sixth sections I will finally present several conclusions together with some approaches for further reflection.

Section 1: Cross-border workers on the labour market

Luxembourg's situation is peculiar in Europe. The country does no longer possess a national labour market but instead a veritable regional one, on which undeniably international aspects appear. Mobility of workers is a historical reality characterised by impressive cross-border flows since at least 1985. The situation is known but deserves us devoting a little bit more attention to it.

Two major reasons may explain this phenomenon more precisely. First of all, the high unemployment rate in the regions bordering on Luxembourg. According to harmonised data,³ in 2008 the following unemployment levels were recorded: 8.4% in Lorraine, 7.1% in Saarland, 5.6% in Rhineland-Palatinate, 7.4% in the Belgian German-speaking community and 10.0% in Wallonia. Luxembourg itself registered a rate of 5.1%. Such conditions on the borders of the Grand Duchy quite naturally attract a large number of persons who are unemployed in their own country. Luxembourg is moreover a job/creating economy. The second reason is the following: certain qualifications required by companies established in Luxembourg are underrepresented inside the country. Recourse to a qualified workforce outside the border hence becomes inevitable. We need only recall in passing that the issue of professional training is one of the essential areas, in which Luxembourg must still make efforts, according to European Union recommendations.

In a former issue of its newsletter, STATEC stated: "It has been shown many times that immigration to Luxembourg is essentially connected with manpower requirements that, in view of the productivity gains expected, are themselves dependent upon economic growth. What will the impact of these economic variables be on demographic growth when one considers that a portion of the demand for labour can also be satisfied by cross-border workers who do not figure in the demographic forecast projections restricted only to residents?"⁴

³ Septième rapport de l'Observatoire interregional du marché de l'emploi, IBA-OIE, décembre 2010, p.35.

⁴ Statnews, STATEC, no 29/2008.

Section 2: Representation of border crossers in Luxembourg's social elections

The question that now arises is to know how, at present, the cross-border workers are represented in the institutions governing industrial relations, in the absence of them being able to play an active decision making role. Let us look at some aspects of this.

During the meetings of the Tripartite coordination committee, which took place in 2005 and 2006, the Government and the social partners decided unanimously and in response to the changing economic climate to proceed to a general assessment of the country's economic situation. One message of the tripartite package centred on the introduction of the so-called "single status" for wage earners in the private sector. On April 29th 2008, Luxembourg's House of Representatives voted the bill on the introduction of the single status.⁵ The law detailing the introduction of the single status came into effect on January 1st 2009 and concerned more than 275,000 wage earners (155,000 blue-collar workers and 120,000 white-collar workers). One of the pivotal objectives of the single status for wage earners in the private sector consists in the abolition of all existing differences within Luxembourg's social legislation between blue-collar and white-collar workers in the private sector⁶.

In order to understand the situation, it needs to be mentioned that before the introduction of the single status there were six professional associations in Luxembourg: the Chamber of Agriculture, the Chamber of Trade, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Private Sector Employees, the Chamber of Labour, the Chamber of Public Servants and Public Employees. The professional associations notably play the role of an advisory board and are directly associated with the legislative procedure of the country.⁷

The introduction of the single status has led to the reorganisation of some institutions, including the merger of the Chamber of Labour, representing blue-collar workers, and the Luxembourg Union of Private Sector Employees, representing white-collar workers from the private sector. With the exception of government officials and public sector employees, all workers and all pensioners with private sector status had to join this single new body: the Chamber of Wage Earners⁸. Now, after the mergers, there is both a single professional body representing private sector workers, the Chamber of Wage Earners, and a single health

⁵ Loi du 13 mai 2008 portant introduction d'un statut unique pour les salariés du secteur privé et modifiant: 1. Le Code du travail; 2. le Code des assurances sociales; 3. la loi modifiée du 8 juin 1999 relative aux régimes complémentaires de pension; 4. la loi modifiée du 4 avril 1924 portant création de chambres professionnelles à base électorale; 5. le chapitre VI du Titre I de la loi modifiée du 7 mars 1980 sur l'organisation judiciaire; 6. la loi modifiée du 4 décembre 1967 concernant l'impôt sur le revenu; 7. la loi modifiée du 22 juin 1963 fixant le régime des traitements des fonctionnaires de l'Etat, Mémorial A, numéro 60, 15 mai 2008.

⁶ THILL, P. *The Introduction of a single status in Luxembourg's private sector*, European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety/SEEurope project, Brussels, 2008.

⁷ Such professional chambers are an exception in Europe. This system is only known in Luxembourg, Austria and in the German Land of Saarland.

⁸ WLODARSKI, O. *New employee chamber brings workers together in single status*, Eurofound, Dublin, 2008.

insurance. The merger of the professional associations was carried out in the aftermath of the social elections of November 12th2008.

The social elections of November 12th 2008 were the first time members of the new Chamber of Wage Earners were elected. Let us have a look at the effects of this vote. The elections were organized via postal ballot, in the form of trade unions proposing candidate lists. About 400,000 employees and pensioners who work or used to work in Luxembourg, regardless of their place of residence, were invited to vote.

However, it needs to be pointed out that the official statistics of the November 12th2008 elections concerning cross-borders' participation had not been made public by January 2012. I was however informed by several people responsible for the organisation of the elections that the voter turnout of cross-border workers had been very low.

The Chamber of Wage Earners comprises 60 elected members. Among others there are five main organisations that run in the elections: the Independent Union Confederation – Luxembourg (OGB-L), the Luxembourg Confederation of Christian Unions (LCGB), the Luxembourg Association of Banking and Insurance Employees (ALEBA) and two unions from the rail sector: FNCTTFEL (has close links with OGB-L) and SYPROLUX (has close links with LCGB).

The results

Table 1: Repartition of 60 seats in the Chamber of wage earners in the aftermath of the November 2008 social elections⁹

OGB-L	LCGB	ALEBA	FNCTTFEL	SYPROLUX
36	16	5	2	1
60.0%	26.7%	8.3%	3.3%	1.7%

In order to proceed to a comparison, let us have a look at the results obtained by the same unions in 2003, cumulating the results obtained for the former Chamber of private sector employees and the Chamber of work.

Table 2: Repartition of 70 seats cumulated by the Chamber of private sector employees and the Chamber of work in the aftermath of the November 2003 social elections¹⁰

OGB-L	LCGB	ALEBA/UEP- NGL-SNEP	FNCTTFEL	SYPROLUX
38	19	7	4	2
54.3%	27.1%	10.0%	5.7%	2.9%

As a result, two elements become evident: First, the OGB-L union has witnessed a progression of 5.7 seats since the creation of the Chamber of wage earners, whereas the LCGB has lost 0.4%.

In addition, the results can be refined in the following way. The FNCTTFEL union takes part, together with the OGB-L in another national confederation: the General work confederation - Luxembourg (CGT-L). SYPROLUX is a LCGB-related union in the rail sector. As a matter of fact, these unions represent ideological groupings that are important for what is analyzed next. There is a block with a socialist tendency (OGBL/FNCTTFEL) and a Christian-social block (LCGB/SYPROLUX). The union results can thus be grouped together in the following way.

Table 3: The results (number of seats) of the 2003 and 2008 social elections according to the ideological union groupings

	OGB-L + FNCTTFEL	LCGB + SYPROLUX	ALEBA
2003	42	21	7
	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%
2008	38	17	5
	63.3%	28.3%	8.3%

⁹ <http://www.csl.lu/index.php/fonctionnement/assemblee-pleniere>.

¹⁰ *Elections pour les chambres professionnelles. Novembre 2003*, Procès-verbal d'élection et de dépouillement, Bureau électoral Chambre des employés privés ; *Elections pour le renouvellement de la Chambre de travail*, Bureau électoral Chambre de travail.

Between 2003 and 2008, the sum of the seats according to the ideological groupings highlights an increase of 3.3% of the OGB-L/FNCTTFEL block in relation to the LCGB/SYPROLUX block. The ALEBA does not belong to any ideological block.

The consequences and the lessons of the electoral results

It is clear that the LCGB union has not been the great winner of the elections. Its President, Robert WEBER, wrote in the aftermath of the elections in the review “Soziale Fortschrëtt” that “Since the beginning, we have known that the single status was not in our favor”. In a comment on the low results for his union, the President indicated that “These results are below our expectations, we are searching for the reasons in our own ranks, we know very well where our weaknesses are and since a couple of months, we have started to tackle our deficiencies. This work will continue consequently after the elections because we are convinced that it will succeed”.¹¹ From the point of view of the OGB-L, it has been noted that “The absolute majority that the voters attributed to the OGB-L is a historic event and the scope for the future of the union movement in Luxembourg can not be underestimated. One thing has to be clear. The massive vote in favor of the OGB-L lists and candidates has not brought us closer to the key objective of the unity of unions representing all the salaried workers, but has above all considerably reinforced the union's political program and its claims to utmost importance”.¹²

Some lessons can be learned from these declarations. First, the LCGB seems to indicate that internal “weaknesses” have been the origin of the disappointing results. Then, the OGB-L declaration seems to indicate that it aims at uniting all union members. So, the idea of a kind of single union is put forward at this level. This idea is of course reinforced by the progression, not only by the OGB-L union, but also by the ideological block that it constitutes with the FNCTTFEL.

Section 3: Cross-border workers and trade unions

During the campaign for Luxembourg’s social elections in November 2008, the country’s two main trade unions OGB-L and LCGB launched an information campaign targeted at cross-border workers.

More specifically, the trade unions held information meetings in border towns such as Saarbrücken in Germany, Thionville in France and Arlon in Belgium. The OGB-L also launched three websites that were aimed at Belgian, French and German cross-border workers respectively. The union highlighted how its website initiatives distinguished themselves from other internet initiatives, which perceive cross-border workers more as “consumers”. The OGB-L believes that cross-border workers should be primarily viewed as employees who contribute daily to Luxembourg’s richness and diversity and who are entitled

¹¹ WEBER, R. Un message clair à nos membres. *Soziale Fortschrëtt*, 2008, n°8, p.3.

¹² ROELTGEN, A. L’OGB-L a consolidé sa position de leader. *OGB-L Aktuell*, 2008, n°12, cahier spécial non paginé.

to know their rights. For its part, the LCGB has dedicated part of its website to cross-border workers. Electoral posters for Luxembourg's unions have also been posted along Belgian, French and German roads.

For the OGB-L, the low participation among cross-border workers in social elections can be explained by a misinterpretation of the Luxembourg model of social governance. However, despite several efforts made by trade union organizations to provide information, interest among cross-border workers in social elections remains low. This can be attributed to a number of other factors. On the one hand, the rate of unionization is very low in France (8 % in 2004)¹³ where about half of Luxembourg's cross-border workers come from. On the other hand, significant disparities emerge in the structure of salaried employment which comprises nationals from Luxembourg, migrant residents in Luxembourg and cross-border workers. Disparities also exist in the types of candidates taking part in the elections. Furthermore, not everyone agrees with Luxembourg's trade union organizations or their messages.

It is possible that, as a result of this situation, the representativeness of a body such as the Chamber of wage earners may be affected and perceived by some cross-border workers as a largely national body although it is difficult to talk of discrimination towards cross-border workers, as their interests constitute a concrete issue on the agenda for social dialogue.¹⁴

It seems to us that in addition to the old divide that results from the coexistence of ideological unions, Luxembourg will increasingly witness the presence of two different worlds: cross-border and resident workers. Yet, we have to recall that the figures (although not published yet) of the most recent Luxembourg social elections organized in 2003 and 2008 indicate that the number of cross-border workers taking part in the election process has been very limited.

Thus, cross-border workers do not seem to be really concerned by the election of delegates into the professional associations, representing their interests. However, the issue concerning the participation would become even more crucial if the growth of the cross-border labor force were to continue so as to exceed that of the residents. In this case, it would indeed be almost unimaginable that a majority of salaried workers would not feel concerned by the governance of the employment market on the sole basis that it resides outside of the borders of the country where it exercises its salaried activity.

Considerations and possible approaches

All of the questions we have raised ought to call for appropriate responses. They might be as follows: Firstly, to change the legislative regulations so as to allow for greater participation of cross-border workers in labour market governance (modernisation of the law on trade union elections, simplification of voting procedures, introducing internet voting, for instance).

¹³ www.eurofound.europa.eu, 10 February 2010.

¹⁴ WLODARSKI, O. *New Employee Chamber Brings Workers Together in Single Status*, Eurofound, Dublin, 2008.

Subsequently, one could also imagine changing the electoral law so as to make it possible for persons not possessing Luxembourg citizenship to be elected as members of parliament. Another response might be extending citizenship to foreigners residing in the country, even though procedures of this type already exist such as, for instance, double nationality.

In any case, all such responses should be preceded by a veritable debate on what is currently referred to as national sovereignty. Will the people of Luxembourg be prepared to abandon a part of their national sovereignty on the pretext of internationalising the labour market in their country? This would mean plenty of issues and debates ahead. If the current situation persists the country will not be able to avoid a major discussion on these matters.

Section 4: Towards a regional labour market governed by the institutions of the Greater Region?

A newspaper article¹⁵ published in June 2009 has sparked discussions. The article evoked the concern felt by Jean-Pierre Masseret, President of the French Region of Lorraine, on the subject of the risk incurred by cross-border workers from Lorraine working in Luxembourg of losing their jobs due to the economic crisis. Jean-Pierre Masseret, in a letter addressed to Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, asked the latter to invite all of the Greater Region's trade union organisations to a meeting of the executive heads of the Greater Region in order to deal with the problem of cross-border workers who have been made redundant in Luxembourg and are now returning to the labour market of their own countries.

That constitutes only one matter, but a particularly enlightening one demonstrating the necessity of coordination at the Greater Region level. In a certain way the President of the Region of Lorraine was inviting his partners of the Greater Region to tackle the problem of labour market internationalisation in Luxembourg and its consequences for the affected neighbouring regions.

That example shows us to what extent Luxembourg's labour market could in future be based on a new form of governance, one not only limited to the framework of Luxembourg but instead to the Greater Region. Is that a possibility or a chimera? In order, not so much to answer the question directly, as to open up windows of potential responses, let us now deal in greater depth with the institutional realities of the Greater Region and with the possibilities of creating new forms of governance for the internationalised labour market that it represents.

“The Greater Region is a laboratory of Europe,” “a Europe in miniature” and “a pre-configuration of Europe,” are some of the expressions that can quite frequently be heard or read in conferences, in fashionable salons or from people with an immediate or a remote

¹⁵ “Masseret à Juncker: Inviter les syndicats,” in *Le Quotidien*, 19 June 2009, page 4.

interest in the area referred to as the “Greater Region.” Sometimes one hears other remarks like “the Greater region is an empty shell,” or “nothing gets done there.”¹⁶

And yet, seen from closer up, we can state that each of these remarks is wrong. They convey a certain misconception of the legal and institutional realities, as we wish to show in the next few lines. We feel that in fact the two types of remarks cited above stem from a misunderstanding, from confusion between two very distinct notions: integration and cooperation. Integration is meant here in its political sense as a process by which independent entities voluntarily delegate or transfer some of their prerogatives and powers to one or more institutions. Cooperation in turn is a whole in which the components of a system work together to achieve certain global priorities.

We will consider the institutions of the Greater Region as well as their jurisdiction and authority. Subsequently we will see how those institutions that are forging cooperative links could eventually forge links of another kind, this time of integration and more specifically aimed at governing the labour market.

Space does not permit us here to go into detail concerning the role and composition of the Greater Region’s institutions. We will only dwell on their jurisdiction.

The institutions of the Greater Region and their competences

The table below provides a summary of the competences of the Greater Region’s institutions.

<i>Competences</i>	Intergovernmental Commission	Regional Commission	Summit of Executive Heads	Interregional Parliamentary Council	Economic and Social Committee
Recommendations	X	X		X	X
Draft agreements	X	X			
Questions		X			
Reports		X			X
Proposals		X		X	X
Decisions			X	X	
Resolutions				X	X
Promotion				X	
Contributions				X	
Opinions				X	
Advice				X	X

¹⁶ CLEMENT, F. La construction sociale du territoire de la Grande Région : une confusion entre les concepts de collaboration et d’intégration, in « *La construction des territoires en Europe. Luxembourg et Grande Région : avis de recherches* », Presses universitaires de Nancy, septembre 2010.

This table prompts us to ask what the real content of the competences of the Greater Region's institutions is. Strictly speaking, one cannot really speak of real options for action. These institutions are restricted, as it were, to:

- issuing **recommendations**;
- elaborating **draft** agreements;
- asking **questions**;
- writing and transmitting **reports**;
- making **proposals**;
- adopting **resolutions**;
- ensuring **promotion**;
- making **contributions**;
- issuing an **opinion**;
- providing **advice**.

The real authority of the institutions

Taking a closer look, the words used to list the powers of Greater Region institutions carry little weight. Such words do not reflect real decision making powers, real activity, carrying out in a collective thrust determined actions. The institutions are instead vested with powers that are more those of consultation than of decision making. In particular in regard to the Interregional Parliamentary Council one would have to note that the primary and inherent vocation of a parliamentary assembly is not to consult but to take decisions. The Interregional Parliamentary Council does not after all function as the parliament of a state, a region within a state or even as the European Parliament would be able to do. And for a good reason since that parliamentary council includes emanations of various different entities. The latter, with the exception of Luxembourg, are parts of independent states. They therefore do not possess the institutional and constitutional powers to act like a real parliamentary assembly.

We find ourselves here in a configuration where none of the member entities of the Greater Region have transferred or delegated to its institutions any real decision making powers capable of producing decisions applicable to all members. It is there that we find something to make reference to those notions of cooperation and integration. The situation of the Greater Region is as described above because it is cooperation that motivates its entities and not integration as is, for instance, the case in the European Union. Moreover there is no “treaty of the Greater Region” like the various treaties that govern the European Union starting with the signature of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. One therefore expects from the Greater Region powers that it does not possess because we imagine that, like the European Union, it is supposed to achieve integration!

The question is therefore: do those institutions really possess any power to act? As one can see and understand, they are not vested with any real decision making powers. Why? A reading of the constitutional or founding texts of the member entities could provide us with the beginnings of an answer.

Let us, in effect, imagine allowing the entities of the Greater Region a function of political integration and not only one of simple cooperation. It would then require those entities to sign international treaties in such a way as to at least partially extract themselves from the national straightjackets in which they are embedded. We will find that political integration by those means would almost be impossible.

The constitutional texts of Luxembourg, Belgium and Germany leave the prerogative to the state of Luxembourg as well as to the federal Belgian and German entities to enter into international treaties. Unfortunately, it is not the same with France, a country in which a treaty cannot have the force of law unless it is approved by the Senate and the National Assembly. The Region of Lorraine does not have the same powers as the other entities of the Greater Region.

One would have to conclude that international affairs remain the privileged domain of the states of which the member entities of the Greater Region form part, albeit with some nuances. Luxembourg, not knowing any federalisation, and being a state, is therefore with certainty the only holder of the power to enter into international agreements or to delegate powers in such a framework.

As far as Belgium and Germany are concerned, they are organized in federated entities capable of taking on international assignments under the powers imparted by their constitutional texts. The regions and communities in Belgium and the Länder in Germany possess such powers. We should furthermore note that on that aspect Belgium has gone further than Germany. The federated entities of Belgium do not need to obtain the agreement of the federal state in order to enter into international treaties while the Länder in Germany have to be given such clearance.

In France, by contrast, the central state remains sovereign and the regions have no powers in international affairs. Only the Senate and the National Assembly have the power to promulgate law. That is not the prerogative of the various regional councils.

Unlike the European Union, to which the member states have delegated authority, the Greater Region does not have any similar configuration. Only agreements between entities capable of exercising international powers are possible in the framework of the Greater Region but it is impossible for the institutions of the Greater Region to do the same. Political integration by means of international treaties between all the entities of the Greater Region is likewise impossible due to obstacles posed by the French constitution. Actions conducted in the Greater Region are for that reason limited. The Greater Region is thus very much a process of cooperation and not one of integration.

The Greater Region and the economic crises

Bearing in mind the alarm raised by Jean-Pierre Masseret in his letter to Jean-Claude Juncker, we might ask the question of what would become of the institutions of the Greater Region in

case the economic crisis worsens and there are massive job losses by border crossers working in Luxembourg. One cannot imagine those institutions, despite their legal fetters, standing by passively without proceeding to undertake certain institutional approaches to react to such layoff developments. The institutions are not the only ones targeted. Within the Greater Region there exist cross-border trade union and employer associations: the Interregional Labour Council of the Three Frontiers (IRS) and the Cross-Border Employers' Association (APAT). These associations should also in future be capable of synergizing in a better way, in order to jointly and in due time make sure that border crossers are getting through the crisis. There is no such thing at present. The only thing one finds are certain double membership agreements between Luxembourg trade unions and their Belgian, French and German counterparts sharing the same ideology. Nonetheless, this double membership does not really apply in case of layoffs. In short, amongst the industrial relations partners efforts will have to be made to increase the efficiency of these cross-border agreements.

Section 5: Towards a new governance of industrial relations

Currently, we can come to the following considerations:

First, it is deplorable that the participation rate during the elections again staid below the expectations. It results that massive sensitization efforts have to be carried out in the future. The weak participation rate is not a phenomenon that limits itself to the 2008 elections. It is the reason why one should rethink the electoral procedure. The current legislation seems to be outdated, concerning the setting up of lists, the procedure per se and the counting mode. It appears to be urgent to act in favor of a modern and adapted legislation. One can ask if it were not appropriate to have recourse to modern technological means as for instance the internet vote .

Second, the weak participation of cross-border workers in the social elections gives them a very relative weight in relation with the employers' union. This is all the more damaging as the recent evolution of the employment market in Luxembourg has brought about the creation of a great number of jobs, the establishment of new foreign companies and, as a consequence, a modification of the sociological composition of the wage system. Hence the utility to think about future modifications as far as electoral matters are concerned in order to ensure protection of workers rights.

Third, we have seen that a progression in seats of the ideological union blocks is manifest and that the unity of the great national unions has been blown, which is a new phenomenon. The question then arises if this change, if not to say upheaval, in the conception of the social dialogue will not have harmful consequences in the medium or long term as much for the salaried workers than for the quality of social dialogue in general.

Fourth, the weak mobilization of cross-border workers will inevitably need to be addressed by appropriate answers. These could be the following: changing the legislative arrangements in such a way that they allow an increased participation of cross-border workers in the governance of the employment market. Modifying the electoral law could also be envisaged

in such a way that it would give access to parliamentary representatives for those who do not detain the Luxembourg nationality. Another answer would be the extension of this nationality to foreign residents, although these procedures do already exist to some extent in the form of the double nationality, for instance.

Lastly, we face a change in the application of neo-corporatist theories concerning the party-trade union link. However at this stage, without a thorough sociological study, this change is only partially explainable. The representation of the workers differs between social elections and legislative elections, and this is undoubtedly because of the difference of the electorate admitted to take part in each type of election.

Conclusions and approaches for consideration

We have found that there are instruments available within the Greater Region to take account of and perhaps even to take care of a new form of governance of the internationalised labour market that Luxembourg constitutes. But we have also found that the constitutional realities of the states whose entities make up the Greater Region may lead to a legal impasse to transfer that arena of cooperation into an arena of veritable political integration.

Nonetheless, the first section of the present article has shown us that the growing internationalisation of the Luxembourg labour market may in future years come to know different governance models, one that also caters for a majority of cross-border workers in the work force inside an independent state. To this the issue of the preservation of Luxembourg's national sovereignty will be added.

If a new form of governance will be set up on the labour market it will be by taking into account this triple perspective: ensuring better representation of cross-border workers, introducing a type of decision sharing system between entities of the Greater Region relating to the labour market and preserving Luxembourg's national sovereignty. That is a very difficult assignment and even a frankly perilous one. The whole trick will basically consist of getting protagonists from different regions and countries together at the same table in order to ensure governing the labour market in one member state of that area differently. At present, we can only suggest several approaches for consideration, more specifically the following ones.

Firstly, one can imagine strengthening the role of the Interregional Parliamentary Council in such a way that it provides opinions that are targeted more at the way to integrate border crossers in governance of the Luxembourg labour market. The Council could also create a seventh commission dealing exclusively with the labour market.

One can also imagine the labour commissions present in the parliamentary bodies of Greater Region entities meeting together alongside the labour commissions of the national parliaments to which the Greater Region entities belong for the purpose of getting a better

grasp on cross-border realities. These upper echelon bodies, enlarged by inclusion of regional components to the national ones, would be in a better position to stay mutually informed about the needs and decision making paths that Luxembourg should adopt to ensure better integration and better representation of border crossers.

Thirdly, on the model of what is done between Belgium and Luxembourg, the national governments of the countries to which entities of the Greater Region belong could occasionally meet to analyse the situation, the problems encountered and the reform approaches to be envisaged. Such meetings could also bring together, as the case might be, the ministers of labour of the entities comprising the Greater Region.

The economic and social councils of the entities making up the Greater Region could meet together alongside the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region in order to envisage better synergies and, especially, to propose strategies to ensure better representation of border crossers in official bodies in Luxembourg. Such an event recently took place between the economic and social councils of Luxembourg and Lorraine.

These few approaches would eventually entail further internationalisation of how cross-border realities are perceived in Luxembourg and to suggest reform strategies aimed at integration and optimal representation of border crossers in Luxembourg, a country whose sovereignty will be preserved, but in a certain sense also “counselled” or even “accompanied.”

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