

1. CHILDCARE INITIATIVE

C. Issever reported on the problems of child care for users and first showed a striking picture of a young child sleeping on a CERN desk. She described the existing child care facilities at CERN and the CERN Child Care Initiative (CCCI) group which was set up with the aim to try to improve the situation for CERN staff and users. C. Issever showed statistics obtained via a survey submitted to CERN staff and users of the four big LHC experiments, which indicated that there were not enough places to fulfil the needs of parents working for or at CERN and that the existing facilities were in general too expensive for CERN users. The statistics were based on 129 replies. 25% of the researches who replied were CERN staff, 72% CERN users and 3% where researchers who were partly paid by CERN. A note, CERN-HR-Note-2008-001, was written on the results, which will be made public soon. The CCCI would like to re-do the survey with the help of the CERN management in order to reach a wider population.

On 4 and 5 May 2006, the Commission presented its Roadmap for the period 2006–2010 to all European stakeholders involved in equality between women and men. This was a major event which brought together a panel of ministers and representatives of the European institutions, along with academic experts and field players. The Roadmap sets out six priority areas for EU action on gender equality for the period 2006–2010: equal economic independence for women and men; reconciling professional life with private and family life; equal participation in decision-making; eradication of all forms of gender-based violence and trafficking; elimination of gender stereotypes; promotion of gender equality in external and development policies. During this conference the commission agreed on the “Barcelona Targets” were to achieve the provision of childcare by 2010 to at least 90 % of children between 3 years old and school age and at least 33 % of children below 3 years of age (EUROSTAT). The survey shows that CERN does not meet the Barcelona Targets. The EU has funds available to help reach these targets and C. Issever asked for help from CERN to seek funds from the European Social Fund (ESF) and stressed that Child Care has to become urgently a high priority issue for CERN. C. Issever mentioned the project in Archamps (Haute-Savoie) which had been proposed to CERN to construct integrated facilities which include apartments, meeting rooms, LAN connections with CERN and in particular crèche facilities with transportation to and from CERN. Subsidising such a crèche with ESF funds could be envisaged. C. Issever requested that the CCCI and CERN management meet and asked that a person from the CERN management be responsible for child care at CERN, and also to assign person from the CERN legal office to follow-up ESF.

In the discussion, there was strong support for this initiative from ACCU delegates, several of whom commented that the situation has not changed at CERN in 30 years and that this is a shame.

The European Commission is preparing for a renewed Social Agenda which will be adopted before this summer. It will look at the social challenges that accompany globalisation and explore what policies are needed within the Member States and at the level of global governance to ensure that globalisation becomes a force of social progress. CERN should move and submit a proposal for funding. M. Metzger commented that this is clearly important as there is real money available and an overall political drive behind it. What is not so good is the cumbersome application procedure. And it was not clear to him if CERN itself would be able to apply for it. It would may be have to be one of the local French communes, which would have to co-finance such a project, and in that case it would probably involve the region and the French government. M. Metzger offered to be the contact person for the CCCI and promised to look into this.

M. Goossens, commenting as a representative of the Staff Association, stressed that it is the employers' responsibility to help the users, who can't expect CERN to do this for them. Issever pointed out that this attitude towards the child care problem of the users has not solved the problem for the past 30 years and that there needs to be a change. She also commented that CERN should have a similar attitude towards providing child care for users like it has towards providing buildings and offices for them, when they come to CERN. Without a proper work environment a user can't work and without a child care option a user with children can't work. Some of the concerns raised, such as the availability of a canteen at the Kindergarten and of places in the Meyrin crèche, are addressed from September. The 20 places available for CERN in the Meyrin crèche are only a first step and can evolve depending on the demand. Issever and other representatives of ACCU stressed out that it is clear from the presented data that the Meyrin crèche places are not meeting the demands of the users and CERN staff and that CERN should act urgently to increase the number of places and find ways to reduce the monthly fees. S. McMahon commented that there is a huge pressure on women to leave HEP because they cannot afford child care. He also commented that places in the "garderie" are difficult to obtain, reservation opens one week in advance at midnight and usually all places are taken within half an hour.