

### 3.4. Management of cooperation and the post Corona employers' organisation

#### Regarding management of cooperation

During the COVID-19 crisis, there is also an important role for the employers' organisation as a "manager" of cooperation.

In these difficult times, where many have been taken by surprise, and where the traditional approaches are often surpassed by the rapidity with which the virus moves, the employers' organisation can see here a good opportunity to act as a good manager of cooperative systems.

The ideal outcome of the good partnership management can be that:

- the employers' organisation is viewed as leading partner of the business community, with an authority to speak on behalf of the business, or in general, or in the field of labour relations and labour issues. And since the workplace issues are so strongly present in the COVID-19 discussions, this field of competence is very important
- The employers' organisation is viewed as cooperative with other employers' organisations "competitors" and is more effective as voice of business via cooperation. The crisis is seen by many as fundamentally threatening health of citizens, of workers, and the economic future of the country. The companies would most probably not approve in any way of parochial stances of the different employers' organisations. They want cooperation and fairness in doing so. In many countries the COVID-19 crisis has been the occasion for employers' organisations to cooperate closely together, towards their membership in delivering services, and towards the government, in taking joint positions.

For good examples in Kenya and the Philippines, click:

[KEPSA explored the business perspective on the impact of coronavirus on Kenya's economy](#)

[Tanzania \(ATE\) applied the ILO survey and developed a useful guide](#)

- the employers' organisation is viewed as effective in relations with trade unions. The same rationale of cooperation as sketched with the other employers organisations may most probably also hold true for the cooperation between employers and trade unions.

We refer to section 3 on social dialogue.

#### Regarding the future of employers organisations after Corona

Obviously the COVID-19 will affect our future as employers' organisation in all its aspects: will membership remain at the same levels, and will the economic crisis not affect the affordability of membership? The view on its usefulness and relevancy, especially since the services may have to be organized totally different? Its governance, since the direct contacts between the organization and its members may be affected? Its main role in lobbying, since the COVID-19 crisis may have shown the essential role of good information and the need for a voice of business, but maybe also the need for a unified voice of business, or more unifying social dialogue?

These reflections will have to be started very soon.

It might be useful first to monitor facts and figures closely in the first months. Evolution of membership, membership of reasons of increase or decrease of membership and fees, the effects of the Corona-crisis on revenue and on specific revenue streams (income from membership, from the different services such as training, advice, legal support. What is affected and what is increasing).

Secondly, a members needs survey, be it under the form of a focus group approach, or under the form of a membership survey, maybe most appropriate. It will help to define new needs or the modification in “old” needs.

Thirdly, the reflection of the CEO and its top management will be needed. What do they see as new venues, necessary short and medium terms modifications like training under e-learning format and what types of investments are needed.

Within VNO, the umbrella employers’ organisation of the Netherlands, a reflection note has been prepared, which invites the management to reflect on the future of employers’ organisations after corona. It can be a first step to start the reflection in each employers’ organisation.

For further reading:

[What will the future of the employers organisation look like](#)