



International Labour Organization
Sub-Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe
Budapest

*Social Cohesion Initiative of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe:
“Strengthening social dialogue and tripartism and enhancing
the technical expertise in labour law in the countries of South Eastern Europe”*

Description of the Network of Government’ experts in labour law
and labour relations of South Eastern Europe

1. Introduction

A technical cooperation project on strengthening social dialogue and tripartism and enhancing the technical expertise in labour law in the countries of South Eastern Europe¹ was launched by the ILO-Sub Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (ILO-SRO Budapest) in May 2003. This project, financed by the Governments of France, Belgium and Italy, is aimed at helping these countries to upgrade their systems of industrial relations and to reform their labour legislation. These projects, which will last three years (2003-2005), has two major components:

1. Strengthening the capacity of workers’ and employers’ organizations to enable them: a) to better represent the interests of their members and b) to play an effective role in the bipartite and tripartite social dialogue;
2. Strengthening the institutions of social dialogue and enhancing the capacity of ministries of labour in the field of social dialogue and labour law to enable them: a) to effectively discharge their duties in the area of labour law formulation and enforcement; b) to play their role in the tripartite social dialogue and c) to provide support to the social partners in their bipartite social dialogue.

In the framework of the second component of the project the ILO-SRO Budapest, in cooperation with the Department for Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration in Geneva and the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, has created a network of government’ experts in labour law and labour relations whose objectives, composition and mode of operation are described below.

¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia Montenegro.

II. Objectives of the network

The transition countries of South Eastern Europe are faced with similar challenges that are to establish sound systems of industrial relations to consolidate democracy and to adapt their labour legislation to making it more consistent with market economy and to facilitate the governance of the labour market. These tasks should be done in harmony with the stipulations of international and European labour standards.

The performance of these tasks is primarily the responsibility of the Ministries in charge of Labour; they are key players in the area of labour law and labour relations. However, in the countries of South Eastern Europe the performance of these tasks is constrained by the weak capacity and resources of the ministries of labour. For example, the capacity of officials in the Ministries of labour in framing labour laws is in some cases hampered by their weak knowledge of international and community labour law and of comparative labour law. Also, there is a lack of knowledge of how to provide technical and administrative support to the social partners in their bipartite social dialogue through, for example, an effective system of registration and extension of collective agreements and training in the area of collective bargaining.

Even though the ministries of labour of these countries do share the same challenges in the area of labour law and labour relations, there is not much exchange of experiences and information among them on how to deal with these challenges facing them. The creation of the network of government' experts on labour law and labour relations is meant to address this gap with a view to facilitating an exchange of information and experiences between the experts of the countries of South Eastern Europe in these two areas, to enable them to: a) learn from each other; b) to find common approaches to deal with the challenges posed by the reform of labour legislation and the upgrading of the systems of labour legislation.

III. Composition

The network is composed of high-level officials from the ministries of labour of the 8 participating countries who bear responsibility in labour law and labour relations; this include drafting and enforcement of labour laws, providing of support and advice to social partners, participation in tripartite social dialogue, and so on. The members of the network (see attached list) have been selected by the ILO in consultation with the Ministers of labour of the participating countries.

IV. Mode of operation

The network is meant to operate during the 3-year implementation period of the project and hopefully beyond that. It will operate via both regular meetings and the use of the NET.

First, the network members benefited of a training course on labour law and social dialogue in a residential seminar in the ILO International Training Centre in Turin on 22-26 September 2003. This training was aimed at:

- Enhancing their knowledge and skills in the broad area of labour law and labour relations in particular the recent trends of comparative labour law
- Improving their skills in drafting labour legislation in harmony with International Labour Standards and European Community Law
- Developing among them a common approach and understanding of the functions and role of the Ministry of Labour in a modern market economy.

After the Turin training course the network embarked in a series of yearly thematic workshops with the view to reflecting collectively with ILO legal experts and European labour law practitioners on labour law-labour relations issues facing their respective countries.

The topics addressed in the thematic workshops are selected by the network members themselves in consultation with the ILO.

In this respect, the first thematic workshop was organised in June 2004 in Dubrovnik-Croatia during which the network members addressed a very topical issue in South Eastern Europe that is “Non Discrimination in Employment and Occupation”. This topic, of common interest for all the participants, was chosen with the view to helping the network members to exchange views and ideas on how to formulate a legal framework and to design institutional tools at national level to combat discrimination in the labour market, in light of the stipulations of ILO standards and the European practices.

According to a survey of network members, conducted by ILO-SRO Budapest in April-May 2005, the knowledge acquired by them in Dubrovnik meeting was timely and extremely useful since most of the participating countries are engaged in the formulation of non discrimination policies and strategies.

The second thematic meeting will take place in Mamaia-Romania on 7-8 July 2005. It will address the question of employment law. It is expected that the network members will learn about ILO standards on employment and study the implications of European Community Law in the field of employment law. They will also discuss the present situation in their own country regarding the development of employment law.

V. Network member's duties

The network cannot operate properly without the active participation of the members themselves. The latter are expected to contribute actively to the functioning of the network through:

- the providing of inputs including documents and pieces of national legislation in the different workshops,
- sending relevant documents to the ILO for dissemination among the network members
- putting questions to the other members of the network on common problems they face in their day-to-day work.

VI. Network Publications

- Labour Law and Labour Administration, SRO Budapest-ILO International training Centre, Final report, Turin, 2003
- Non-Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, Final report by Y. Ghellab, ILO SRO, 2005

VII. Annex:
(List of network members, attached)

1) Mr. Ledio Milkani

Head of Institutional Legislation and Integration Sector
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Albania

2) Mr. Gramos Xhangolli

Secretary of the National Labour Council
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
Albania

3) Mr. Damir Dizdarevic

Assistant Minister
Ministry of Civil Affairs
Bosnia and Herzegovina

4) Ms. Džana Kadribegović

Assistant Minister
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

5) Mr. Rajko Kličković

Assistant Minister for Labour and Employment
Ministry of Labour, and War Invalids Welfare
Republika Srpska

6) Mr. Vesselin Atanassov Ilkov

Senior Expert, European Integration and International Relations Directorate
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Bulgaria

7) Ms. Lovrenka Brajković Bulat

Economist, Adviser in the Sector for Labour and Labour Market for EU Integration
Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship
Croatia

8) Ms. Gjylnaze Gola

Head of Labour Law Division
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Kosovo

9) Ms. Fatime Avdyli

Chief of Social Dialogue Section
Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
Kosovo

10) Ms. Maria Bivol

Management and Public Administration
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

Moldova

11) Ms. Vjera Soc

Labour lawyer
Ministry of Labour and Social Care
Montenegro

12) Ms. Anka Stojkovic

Labour lawyer
Ministry of Labour and Social Care
Montenegro

13) Ms. Denisa Patrascu

Legal Advisor
Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family
Romania

14) Ms. Snežana Bogdanović

Senior Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy
Serbia

15) Mr. Vladimir Garic

Labour lawyer
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy
Serbia

Coordination of the network

Mr. Youcef Ghellab

Sr. Specialist Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations
ILO-Sub Regional Office
Budapest, Hungary

Mr. Arturo Bronstein

Sr. Labour Law Policy Adviser
DIALOGUE, ILO Geneva

Ms. Krisztina Homolya

Programme Assistant
ILO-Sub Regional Office
Budapest, Hungary