

## **Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration Branch:**

### **Knowledge sharing activities**

The Social Dialogue, Labour Law and Labour Administration Branch of the ILO (DIALOGUE) aims to promote approaches to workplace governance which are conducive to sound industrial relations at enterprise, sectoral, national, regional and cross-border levels. In this framework DIALOGUE generates research and outreach activities notably on labour market institutions, collective bargaining, legal frameworks, workers' participation and gender integration in economic and social policy making, and other key areas related to labour market governance. Such research and outreach activities are both thematic (Labour Legislation, Social Dialogue and Labour Administration), and regional (Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America and The Caribbean). They aim to be constantly abreast of developments in a rapidly changing world of work, and constitute the basis of the knowledge sharing activities of DIALOGUE listed below.

#### **a. Communities of practice and networks**

In the context of research projects in the area of social dialogue and industrial relations, DIALOGUE has built strong networks with both external academic and research institutions, and with the ILO's International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS). A number of research projects have been conducted jointly with these partners, and more are planned in the years to come. This is the case, for instance, in the area of cross-border social dialogue and International Framework Agreements (IFAs). Research networks are often loose but key in keeping participants abreast of recent developments in the areas under examination. They offer a platform for presentation of on-going and finalized research, and constitute a source of information for ILO staff. Currently, one such research network is active on the question of the impact of IFAs and is composed of renowned researchers in academic institutions such as the University of Berlin, the University of Colorado, the *Institut de Recherches Economiques et Sociales* (IRES), the *Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan/Institutions et Dynamiques Historiques de l'Economie* (IDHE), the Centre for Labour Market Studies of the University of Leicester, but also the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin), and the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI).

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## **b. Exchange platforms: DIALOGUE Open Workspace (accessible only to DIALOGUE staff members).**

One of the conclusions of DIALOGUE Technical learning Workshop held on 11-12 December 2007 was that the Branch needed to improve its knowledge sharing and its knowledge management. Against that background, DIALOGUE is now developing an “open workspace” to facilitate sharing of information and more importantly sharing of knowledge.

An open workspace is an Internet Platform with a limited access for a predetermined circle of users. The idea behind is to create a forum for joint information sharing, joint discussion and joint editing. Everybody who has access is able and entitled to add and to take information, to download and to upload files and to participate in discussion forums or do joint review of documents, etc.

The “open workspace” is the knowledge-sharing pillar of DIALOGUE's knowledge management strategy. The other two pillars are DIALOGUE Research and Staff Training. The objective of the open workspace is to ensure an efficient transfer and communication on DIALOGUE generated knowledge and to stimulate its community of practices.

It is meant to enable DIALOGUE to: (a) enhance the quality of its work; (b) strengthen its capacity to innovate; and (c) better use its limited resources.

The platform will be only accessible to DIALOGUE staff members, including our TC Experts and CTAs. It is critical that the open workspace be designed with our field colleagues so that it meets everyone’s needs and expectations.

DIALOGUE ASIA Team is designing and piloting this open workspace. Achievements will be reviewed by March 2009 and the decision to expand the workspace to all teams will be taken then.

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## **c. Fora**

**Labour Court Judges Meetings:** DIALOGUE is involved in the organization of annual Labour Court Judges Meetings. This is in the context of training activities aimed at the professional development of labour court judges and staff, and the regular discussions organized with European Presidents and Judges of Labour Courts on themes of common concern related to the evolution of national labour law, notably in light of key judicial decisions.

For more information on the meetings of European Labour Court Judges, see <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/events/judges/index.htm>

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**The International Industrial Relations Association (IIRA):** The IIRA exists since 1966 as a centre for knowledge sharing in the area of industrial relations. Its secretariat is located at DIALOGUE and the head of the Branch acts as the IIRA's Secretary. The association provides a forum for presentation of on-going or completed research notably during its regional and World Conferences. It is open to researchers, academics and practitioners from all over the world, without regard to political, philosophic or religious orientations.

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**The International Society for Labour and Social Security Law (ISLSSL):** The ISLSSL aims to support research on labour and social security law and function as a platform for promoting the exchange of ideas, informing about comparative perspectives and promoting cooperation between scientists, legal practitioners and other experts in the field of labour and social security law. The ISLSSL organizes world congresses aimed at generating discussion and scientific exchange, notably between members of different regional organizations. The chief of DIALOGUE is member of the Society's executive committee. In 2008 the ISLSSL celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary since its creation. An ISLSSL Bulletin is produced every three months (see, <http://www.asociacion.org.ar/ISLSSL/>).

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#### **d. Newsletters: The IIRA's Bulletin and Membership Directory**

Furthermore, an **IIRA Bulletin** is produced and distributed to all members subscribed to the IIRA, together with a Membership Directory. The IIRA Bulletin is published twice a year, and includes news on IIRA activities, members' activities, forthcoming meetings and events, ongoing research projects, recent publications, book notes, etc. IIRA members are welcome to send any information that might be of interest for inclusion in the Bulletin to the IIRA Secretariat. The **IIRA Membership Directory** is published at irregular intervals. It contains the names and addresses of all members, as well as information on their professional activities.

See, also <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/iira/membership/>

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### **e. Repositories (databases)**

DIALOGUE places at the disposal of ILO staff and external researchers and practitioners a number of databases, including:

**(1) The Termination of Employment Digest:** This Digest is a database on termination of employment regulation. It builds on the Termination of Employment Digest published by the ILO in 2000 and aims at establishing a set of national and comparative information on this topic. This information is currently compiled and organised according to national profiles which are accessible on the ILO website and, as of February 2009, will be made available through an on-line database on national legislation on termination of employment.

See, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/termination/>

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**(2) The Labour Legislation Guidelines:** The Labour Legislation Guidelines has been initially developed by DIALOGUE in collaboration with the InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration and the InFocus Programme on Child Labour of the ILO. The present version of the Guidelines is intended to promote the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted by the ILO Conference at its 86<sup>th</sup> Session, Geneva, June 1998. It includes national labour law texts in various fields covered by the eight ILO fundamental Conventions.

See, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/llg/main.htm>

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**(3) The National Labour Law Profiles:** The National Labour Law Profiles aim to provide a rapid overview of the labour law of a number of ILO member States. The purpose of these profiles is to facilitate a general understanding of how the labour legislation functions in each country, and to provide the reader with an easy access to information on a number of topics.

See, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/ifpdial/info/national/index.htm>

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**(4) Labour inspection audits:** Since March 2008 DIALOGUE conducts labour inspection audits at the request of ILO member States. These reports are made available to the public after a six-month embargo. The first one is expected to be released in February 2009. A database containing these reports is under construction and will soon be accessible on-line in DIALOGUE's public website.

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