



Ninth European Regional Meeting

Oslo, Norway, 8–11 April 2013

ERM.9/D.7

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The Oslo Declaration: Restoring confidence in jobs and growth

Context

At our last Meeting, held in Lisbon in February 2009, we were in the midst of a severe economic crisis with rising unemployment, uncertainty and negative impacts on large numbers of workers and enterprises. This led to the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact in June 2009 which was subsequently endorsed by the G20 as part of their policy framework to confront the crisis.

Four years later, national realities are still differentiated. Some countries in the European and Central Asian (ECA) region are recovering from the crisis with stable or improving labour markets. However in significant parts of our region the crisis has deepened, with unemployment rising to alarming levels, particularly for young people, increasing job insecurity, growing inequalities, weakening of social protection, deteriorating and uncertain environment for enterprises and investment, while many governments are putting in place painful reforms and struggle with debt and monetary problems.

There is a need to create positive pathways in these countries to overcome negative economic, social and political consequences and restore trust. Social dialogue and collective bargaining serve as effective tools to mitigate the impact of the crisis, but in many countries they have been weakened.

Fiscal consolidation, structural reform and competitiveness, on the one hand, and stimulus packages, investment in the real economy, quality jobs, increased credit for enterprises, on the other, should not be competing paradigms. It is in our common interest to elaborate sustainable approaches in order to promote jobs, growth and social justice.

We consider that the measures contained in the 2009 Global Jobs Pact are relevant and should be effectively implemented.

Confidence can be restored.

Policy expectations

Due to its tripartite structure and its mandate, the ILO is ideally placed to assist constituents to address social and economic crises and to help design sound and equitable reform policies.

The ILO should:

- promote policies that foster decent work and job creation through:
 - employment-friendly macroeconomic policies and investment in the real economy;
 - an enabling environment for enterprises;
 - appropriate strategies to enhance competitiveness and sustainable development while respecting fundamental principles and rights at work;
- promote strategies that improve job quality and close the gender wage gap;
- promote policies which build and maintain business confidence, enterprise sustainability, particularly of SMEs, in line with the 2007 ILC resolution on sustainable enterprises;
- promote policies that help jobseekers through efficient and effective active labour market programmes particularly targeting the needs of young and older workers and promoting women’s participation;
- address the mismatches between the skills of workers and the needs of the labour market;
- promote the implementation of the ILC 2012 Call for Action on the youth employment crisis;
- promote strategies to enhance investment in research and development, including innovative technologies and the green economy;
- promote adequate and sustainable social protection systems;
- promote strong and responsible social partnership in order to have social dialogue at all levels which contributes to equitable distribution, social progress and stability based on productivity-oriented wage policies;
- support the full realization of the ILO 2008 Social Justice Declaration with particular attention to the fundamental principles and rights at work.

ILO means of action

The current situation demands an exceptional response from the ILO. The reform process at the ILO must enhance its abilities to take action.

We call upon the Office to:

- provide evidence-based, high-quality research, analysis and technical advice;
- provide assistance to constituents on specific challenges identified in respective countries of the region;
- assist in the implementation of fundamental labour standards and other relevant international labour standards;

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- facilitate the exchange of experience, including through platforms for sharing good practices and through the organization of seminars for mutual learning focused on concrete issues of concern;
 - build capacity of governments and social partners to take up their responsibilities to reinforce their contribution, through enhanced social dialogue, collective bargaining and effective social partnership, to recovery and reforms;
 - promote synergies and policy coherence with international and regional organizations and institutions – particularly the IMF, OECD, the World Bank, the EU and the Eurasian Economic Commission – on macroeconomic, labour market, employment, and social protection issues, and through forums such as the G20 Joint Labour and Finance Ministers Meeting to be hosted by the Russian Federation in July 2013.