



Joint conclusions

**Joint Conclusions
of the 12th High Level Meeting between the International Labour Office
and the European Commission**

Brussels, 30 September - 1 October 2015

On 30 September and 1 October 2015 in Brussels, the International Labour Office and the European Commission held their 12th High Level Meeting since the renewal of their Exchange of Letters in 2001. The Meeting was also an opportunity to build upon the Strategic Partnership in the field of development cooperation signed in 2004 between both institutions.

Led by the commitment to maintain their well-established and many-sided cooperation and adapt it to new challenges, the ILO and the European Commission engaged in in-depth discussions over policy developments affecting the world of work. They have noted with satisfaction that their joint cooperation has led to tangible improvements in the world of work.

Participants shared visions and policy priorities; they discussed programmes and activities with a view to identify guiding elements for a sound ILO-EU cooperation over the year ahead.

Representatives of ILO and the European Commission highly appreciated the open and constructive discussions at both technical and senior management level which convincingly demonstrated the commitment of both organisations to work closely together on issues of common concerns and interest.

The following Operational Conclusions were agreed as outcome of the High Level Meeting, shaping the policy context for ILO-EC cooperation until their next High Level Meeting. The attached participants' list and the jointly agreed agenda of the two consecutive days of the HLM form integral parts of the annexes of the present conclusions.

General Conclusions	
A sound partnership	<p>For over a decade the ILO and the EC have built a many-sided and rich cooperation on employment and social affairs. Acknowledging the achievements of that partnership, the pressing human, economic and social challenges and the opportunities offered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they agree to enhance their cooperation at several levels.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen their coordination to promote social justice/fairness, decent work and international labour standards in the EU, in third countries and in the global agenda, including in the context of the G20, in joint activities with multilateral organisations and within the context of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; 2. Reinforce contributions to each other's initiatives, run joint research and intensify exchanges on jobs, growth and investment, youth employment, informal economy, social protection, gender equality, migration, working conditions, social dialogue, labour statistics as well as long-term trends in the world of work; 3. Keep each other regularly informed about the implementation of international labour standards in the EU and in partner countries. 4. Consult each other on issues of common interest requiring immediate attention.

Strategic Orientations for ILO-EU Cooperation in the global agenda	
Future of Work and EU Social Agenda	<p>Restoring growth and creating more and better jobs are today's outstanding political objectives of both the EU and the ILO. Addressing the changing nature of jobs and making the achievement of social justice an agenda for today and tomorrow is also a shared aim.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Reinforce mutual initiatives aimed at ensuring that growth is job-rich and inclusive as well as at improving job quality, labour market dynamics and inclusiveness; Exchange information on the employment impact of the Investment Plan for Europe and on the EU social agenda; 6. Exchange information on policies to combat long-term unemployment, to enhance skills matching and recognition as well as anticipation of skills needs to support labour mobility; 7. Work together on techniques (benchmarks, indicators) and rights in support of upward social convergence; Exchange views on economic and social divergence in the EMU and policies to address it;; 8. Share ideas and experience on social protection floors, on modernisation of social protection systems; 9. Step up their joint research and sharing of information on their research and analytical work on long-terms changes in the world of work; 10. Explore the possibility of launching a joint initiative on aspects of the future of work such as the sharing economy or on new technologies and job quality in the context of the ILO centenary initiative. <p>The EC will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Contribute to research activities and dialogues associated with the future of work centenary initiative and actively prepare EU contribution to the ILO centenary.

Sustainable development and challenges in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	<p>“Transforming our world - the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”: With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, a historic opportunity will arise to tackle the structural weaknesses of sustainable development globally, among them poverty, and inequality, and to promote decent work and adequate social protection . The effective implementation of this Agenda is of the greatest importance.</p> <p>Therefore, the EC and the ILO will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Work together to promote the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda through joint actions at international and multilateral levels and development cooperation with special focus on decent work and social protection; 13. Exchange views regularly on progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals and targets, especially on inclusive growth, youth employment, child and forced labour, skills enhancement, social protection coverage, empowerment of women, as well as increases in productivity, productive employment and quality of work; 14. Exchange information on the work on a global indicator framework (and associated global and universal indicators), including the work of the Inter-agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators; 15. Continue to support the improvement of national capacities in the field of labour statistics, and in particular for measuring progress towards decent work.
Migration and forced labour	<p>Migration and the refugee crisis are high on EU's and the ILO's agenda. Both the ILO and the EC promote a rights-based approach and have taken initiatives in these areas, including strategies to address migrants' smuggling, trafficking in human beings and forced labour and reacting to the most recent situation related to migration and the refugee crisis.</p> <p>The EC and the ILO will explore a more strategic approach to their cooperation in these areas and will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Explore possibilities of joint actions in response to the migration and the refugee crisis and mitigating adverse impacts on labour markets resulting from potential exploitation of this vulnerable group while promoting positive impacts on economies and societies; 17. Cooperate in promoting the ratification and implementation of the 2014 ILO Forced Labour Protocol and Recommendation 18. Carry out joint projects on migrant domestic workers and forced labour, including in fisheries, and jointly promote their results; 19. Organise a workshop on the implementation of the domestic Workers Convention 189 in the EU and follow-up on its outcomes; 20. Explore possibilities of further cooperation where appropriate in the fields of labour migration, fair recruitment, domestic work, forced labour and trafficking in human beings in particular regions or sectors; 21. Explore cooperation on SDG target 8.7 (elimination of forced labour) and 8.8 (labour migration) including on data collection and statistics; 22. Continue their exchange of information on their respective activities. <p>The EC will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Monitor the adoption of the Council Decisions on the ratification of the Forced Labour Protocol by EU Member States and the ratification process; 24. Actively promote the ratification and implementation of the Forced Labour Protocol by partner countries.

Trade and labour, including International labour Standards	<p>Over the years, the ILO and the EC have developed strong cooperation in the area of international labour standards. This cooperation has become extremely relevant in the sustainable development context of the EU trade agenda.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Explore ways to intensify their cooperation with respect to the implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work in the context of trade related matters, including in binding provisions in this area contained in EU Free Trade Agreements and in the GSP framework; 26. Continue and, where possible, enhance the exchange of information, including on site information, on the implementation of core labour standards by partner countries in a trade context. This may include ILO providing expertise and technical assistance to support the implementation of core labour standards by partner countries taking into account the conclusions of the ILO supervisory bodies; 27. Explore possibilities to carry out joint research and capacity building on trade and labour, including international labour standards.
Social dialogue	<p>Social dialogue is a shared value of both the ILO and the EC and an essential tool in the achievement of inclusive growth. The ILO and the EC have concluded a strategic partnership on social dialogue for the period 2014 – 2017.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28. Implement their joint projects combining capacity building and analytical work to support the strengthening of social dialogue in EU; 29. Jointly disseminate the results of their projects on social dialogue and contribute where appropriate in related publications; 30. Inform each other about their social dialogue activities and meetings, in particular at sectoral level and explore possibilities of crossed participation in these meetings and of organising joint events, for instance in the context of the EU new start for social dialogue ; 31. Cooperate in the strengthening of social dialogue in enlargement and neighbouring countries; including the support to capacity building of the social partners, the contribution of the ILO to the EC-Turkey dialogue on trade union rights, and input to the policy dialogue to be established with the three Eastern Association Agreement countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine); 32. Cooperate in the Union for the Mediterranean ad hoc work group on social dialogue, including a possible follow-up; 33. Exchange ideas to promote social dialogue in developing countries, with the participation of relevant social partners, including European and international social partners' organisations; 34. Explore possibility for further cooperation to help Greece rebuild its social dialogue framework.

Issues addressed in technical meetings	
Informal Economy and Undeclared work	<p>Facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy and reducing undeclared work are of a high priority for both the ILO and the EU in the years to come. This convergence of priorities calls for strengthening the cooperation of the two organisations.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Discuss options for the participation of the ILO in meetings and activities of the future "EU platform in the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work", in which a permanent observer role for the ILO is proposed; 36. Address informal economy and undeclared work in the context of the future Employment Platform for the Western Balkans and jointly review the outcomes of projects undertaken in partnership that are targeting workers and enterprises in the informal economy; 37. Work with the Greek authorities to finalize the agreement for a cooperation project aimed at fighting undeclared work in Greece and explore possibilities to strengthen their cooperation on indicators on informal employment; 38. Cooperate to promote the ILO Recommendation n°204 on the transitions from informal to formal economy, including through development cooperation and in the context of EU cooperation with Neighbourhood countries, building on previous EC development cooperation experience in this field.
Youth employment	<p>Youth unemployment, underemployment and inactivity is one of the key challenges facing the world today. Reinforced and intensive cooperation between the ILO and the EU, based on major initiatives taken by both organisations can help efficiently address it.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 39. Continue to enlarge the scope of their cooperation on youth employment in particular with regard to actions in multilateral fora (2030 Agenda, G20), stressing the important role of the social partners in this context; 40. Ensure strong complementarity of the respective activities, by enhancing the regular exchange of information on policy analysis, ongoing technical assistance and best practices and by focusing on complementary action whenever possible; 41. Implement the ongoing technical cooperation project on enhancing capabilities of policy-practitioners in the area of Youth Guarantee schemes (including also apprenticeships); 42. Jointly advocate and explore initiatives for the promotion of youth employment in developing, enlargement and Neighbourhood countries, disseminate results of on-going cooperation.
Occupational Safety and Health and working conditions	<p>Improving OSH is a priority for both the ILO and the EU. The EU 2014-2020 strategic framework on OSH and the ILO Global Action for Prevention on OSH Programme are the leading initiatives of both organisations. Cooperation on OSH and working conditions in global supply chains is a major area for cooperation between the ILO and the EC.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 43. Keep each other informed about their research and technical meetings on OSH and invite each other where appropriate; 44. Explore possibilities to work together on OSH in the context of global supply chains, sub-contracting and in emerging economies, promotion of sustainable

	<p>production practices including better working conditions, in particular in the garment sector;</p> <p>45. Cooperate on safer workplaces in the context of the G20, responsible supply chains in the context of the G7 and Vision Zero Fund;</p> <p>46. Explore possibilities to develop exchange of good practice and knowledge in the context of OSH enforcement;</p> <p>47. Explore possibilities to work together in the area of OSH data collection, on occupational diseases, workplace compliance and training activities;</p> <p>48. Explore possible synergies to address OSH issues in Turkey's; mining sector.</p> <p>The EC will:</p> <p>49. Actively prepare EU contribution to the ILO decent work in global supply chain general discussion for the 105th session (2016) of the ILC.</p>
Specific countries	<p>The ILO and EC can build on their long-standing cooperation with specific countries and the outcomes achieved, which are guided by the findings of the ILO supervisory bodies and implemented in consultation with the government and the social partners in the countries concerned</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <p>50. Bangladesh: continue to work toward the full implementation of the Sustainability Compact for Bangladesh, including regular exchanges on developments and cooperation and explore possibilities to contribute to new initiatives, including as regards vocational education and training and employment injury insurance;</p> <p>51. Myanmar: cooperate, together with other international partners, on the promotion of international labour standards, including under the Myanmar Labour Initiative, and other areas of cooperation such as peace, reconciliation and development;</p> <p>52.</p> <p>53. Pakistan: cooperate on the promotion of international labour standards and working conditions in the textile and garment sectors; Thailand: cooperate on the promotion of international labour standards, in the fight against unacceptable forms of work in the fishing and seafood sector and other areas related to decent work;</p> <p>54. Gulf countries: keep each other informed of developments and outreach regarding the situation of migrant workers in the region;</p> <p>55. Uzbekistan: Build upon the already significant progress achieved in eliminating child labour, step up their cooperation towards eliminating forced labour and assess their cooperation to address these issues and promote decent work;</p> <p>56. Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood countries: fostering focused policy dialogue and cooperate on the promotion of labour standards and social dialogue, including through capacity building, the Employment Platform for the Western Balkans, the possible policy dialogue on employment and social issues with the three Eastern Association Agreement countries, and explore possibilities of joint projects regarding labour inspection;</p> <p>57. Southern Neighbourhood countries: cooperate on the promotion of labour standards and social dialogue;</p> <p>58. Explore possibilities to cooperate in Africa as regards jobs for peace and resilience, migration and Ebola and consider specific needs of fragile States.</p>

Joint Research	<p>The joint EC-ILO research activities have been appreciated by both sides and wherever there is a value added joint cooperation should be continued.</p> <p>The ILO and the EC will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 59. Exchange regular information on programme and policy evaluations and on on-going ILO-EC research work including “Inventory of policy responses to the crisis”;; 60. Carry out joint research on labour provisions in trade and investment arrangements and on improving impact assessment of the effects of trade on employment. Implement the agreed cooperation on “Strengthening the impact on employment of sector and trade policies” and "Workers' rights and globalising economies – assessment of labour provisions in trade and investment arrangements" and explore possibilities for follow-up; 61. Jointly disseminate the results of their joint research on “Crisis responses, competitiveness and jobs”, "long term trends in the world of work, their effects on inequalities and income categories and the consequences of these changes on industrial relations" and "'Post crisis social dialogue -best and innovative practices in the EU 28". Where appropriate, organise a conference to discuss the findings of this research work and explore follow-up; 62. Continue collaboration in strengthening partner countries capacities to monitor progress towards decent work, including through enhancement of labour market information systems; 63. Further develop dialogue and research on the diffusion and impact of new forms of work and other non-standard forms of employment in particular linked to new technologies 64. Continue the information exchange on relevant research carried out in both institutions, and where relevant invite each other to dissemination events.
Preparation of forthcoming key events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 65. The ILO and the EC will maintain close cooperation regarding relevant international events taking place in 2015/2016, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The G20, and in particular in the preparation of Employment and Labour Ministers Meetings and Task Force on Employment; - The High Level Meetings of the Bangladesh Compact and the Myanmar Labour rights initiatives; - The G7 joint employment and development Ministerial Meeting on responsible Supply Chains in October 2015; - The ASEM Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting – December 2015; - Preparations for the ILC 2016 agenda items on Global Supply Chains, Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, Social Justice Declaration and labour standards – June 2016; - The Union for the Mediterranean Employment and Labour Ministerial – foreseen in September 2016.