ILO Director-General Elect addresses EU Employment Conference

On 6 and 7 September 2012, the ILO Director-General Elect Guy Ryder spoke at the European Commission’s “Jobs for Europe” conference. In his closing statement, Guy Ryder welcomed the shared commitments expressed at the conference by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, European Parliament President Martin Schulz and European Council President Herman Van Rompuy for a jobs-oriented approach. He supported President Barroso’s call for balanced reforms of the labour market and for making full use of the potential of social dialogue, including at EU Member State level.

Assessing the global and EU employment situation, Guy Ryder underlined that the drama of the global and European unemployment crisis shows the need for a policy approach with growth and decent job creation as top priority of European policy. There is evidence "that the currently predominant mix of austerity and structural reforms is unacceptable and has produced negative results", he pointed out. He indicated that with an ILO involvement in the EU programme countries, such as Greece, and if ILO were listened to, there could have been better outcomes than we have today.

Guy Ryder affirmed that the ILO is ready to deepen its positive relationship with the EU in order to move forward on the employment and social dimension of the response to the global financial, economic and social crisis.
Guy Ryder meets with Martin Schulz, Herman Van Rompuy, László Andor and Andris Piebalgs

The ILO Director-General Elect Guy Ryder had bilateral meetings in Brussels with European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, with European Parliament President Martin Schulz, with EU Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Commissioner László Andor and with EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs. These meetings gave occasion for an open and positive exchange on future cooperation between the ILO and the EU.

Juan Somavia addresses “Jobs for Europe” conference in a special video message

On the first day of the EU employment conference, the ILO Director-General Juan Somavia addressed the conference in a special video message. “The challenge is to achieve socially responsible fiscal consolidation in the medium term, while stimulating growth of the real economy in the short term, and to pave the way to the expansion of decent employment”, Somavia said. He argued that Europe’s future is linked to recovering the essential meaning of work, as a source of individual dignity and social stability.

The ILO Office actively contributed to the EU conference. Raymond Torres, Director of the ILO’s International Institute for Labour Studies, was one of the three rapporteurs of the conference. Christine Evans-Klock, Director of the ILO’s Skills and Employability Department and Vincenzo Spiezia, Senior Economist at the ILO’s International Institute for Labour Studies, participated as panellists.

Landmark EU Communication on Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation

The ILO Office very much welcomes the new Communication on Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation adopted by the European Commission on 20 August 2012, to which the ILO and the wider UN have provided inputs through their respective responses to the EU consultation. The Communication provides a precise, clear and comprehensive outline of the EU approach for supporting social protection through EU development cooperation. It underlines that the EU has contributed to and supported the adoption of the new ILO Recommendation on Social Protection Floors (SPFs) at the June 2012 International Labour Conference. The Communication states that the concept of SPFs provides a well-defined basis on which to build coordinated, and where possible joint, EU support for social protection in EU partner countries which decide
to develop them. The ILO Office stands ready for contributing, in cooperation with the EU, governments, social partners and other stakeholders, to the effective implementation of the communication.

EESC panel on public Rio debriefing meeting "Bringing Rio home"

On 5 July 2012, the EESC Sustainable Development Observatory organized a Rio+20 debriefing session, which fed into the thematic EESC plenary debate “Bringing Rio home” on 11 July 2012. The ILO-Brussels contributed to the debriefing by providing an ILO assessment of the Rio+20 outcomes. The ILO noted that decent employment and social protection are mentioned in the Rio+20 outcome document. Social inclusion, decent work and social dialogue will have to be at the heart of the policy agenda in order to achieve sustainable development, as outlined in the recent ILO-UNEP publication “Working towards sustainable development”. The ILO informed the EESC that more and more emerging economies and other developing countries are implementing programmes on greening the economy and green jobs. Follow-up to Rio+20 at the international level will include a discussion of the Rio+20 outcomes at the upcoming 67th UN General Assembly session.

ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers to enter into force

After its ratification by Uruguay and the Philippines, the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No.189) will enter into force in the second half of 2013. The European Commission (EC) is currently preparing a Council decision authorizing EU Member States to ratify the Convention for those items affecting the EU exclusive competences. In the context of the EU Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings, the EC had already urged its Member States to ratify the Convention.

ILO guidance note on social dialogue for EU development cooperation practitioners

The ILO-Brussels recently published a guidance note on promoting social dialogue through EU development cooperation. The objective is to inform development cooperation practitioners of the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS), EU delegations and EU Member States on social dialogue,
tripartite consultation processes, institutions and related international labour standards, and their contribution to development. The European Commission intends to include social dialogue and related international labour standards in its future external assistance programming, in line with orientations reflected in the EU “Agenda for Change” on development policy and taking into account the important role of social dialogue in the EU treaties.

**ILO updated figures on youth unemployment show impact of euro crisis**

On 4 September 2012, the ILO launched updated figures on worldwide youth employment trends. The ILO paper, titled “Global Employment Outlook: Bleak Labour Market Prospects for Youth”, shows that the impact of the euro crisis is spreading as far afield as East Asia and Latin America, worsening the situation for many young jobseekers worldwide.

**ILO warns: wage cuts can hurt economic growth**

The European Central Bank’s monthly report for August called for more flexibility in the wage determination process, lowering minimum wages, flexibility in the labour market - coupled with measures to strengthen competitiveness. Subsequently, the ILO published a warning that cutting wages tends to increase competitiveness but can also hurt economic growth as it decreases domestic consumption, which affects growth. The 2009 ILO European Regional Meeting outcome stated that flexibility should be combined with security.

**Belgian government adopts draft law modernizing development cooperation**

At the initiative of the Belgian Federal Minister of Development Cooperation Paul Magnette, the Belgian government adopted a proposal for a new law modernizing development cooperation. This law, after adoption by the parliament, will replace the current development cooperation framework, dating from 1999. The new draft law supports the ILO’s decent work agenda that includes employment, social protection, social dialogue and fundamental rights and principles at work. It is in line with the EU “Agenda for Change”.

**30th ratification of Maritime Labour Convention: a global milestone for seafarers**

The Philippines is the 30th ILO Member to ratify the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006), which required ratification by at least 30 members to come into force. The MLC will enter into force in August 2013, and will apply to nearly 60 per cent of the world’s commercial fleet. The Convention gives every seafarer the right to have a safe and secure workplace, fair terms of employment, decent working and living conditions on board and enjoy health protection, medical care and
other forms of social protection. It also establishes a level playing field for quality ship-owners. Nine EU Member States have ratified the MLC – Cyprus was the latest and 9th EU country to ratify – and others are finalizing the ratification process in line with the request by the EU Council to ratify the MLC. The EU Council and the European Parliament are currently discussing two proposed EU directives on maritime inspection based on the MLC.

Colloquium on Belgian social dialogue

The Belgian training centre Studipolis is organizing a colloquium on the Belgian system of social dialogue. The colloquium, titled “What future for the Interprofessional Agreement as a cornerstone of the Belgian social dialogue?” takes place on 18 October 2012 in the Academy Palace in Brussels. For more information and registration please visit www.studipolis.be.

ILO response to EC consultation on a Post-2015 Development Framework

The ILO Office replied to a European Commission (EC) consultation “Towards a Post-2015 Development Framework”. This consultation prepares the EU contribution to the UN follow-up process on efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which will also raise the question of what might follow after 2015. Decent work and involvement of social partners should be fully part of this new development framework, the ILO response says.

Study Day on economic governance in the EU

On 20 September 2012, the Belgian Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social dialogue and the Belgian Association of Industrial Relations organize a study day on economic governance in the European Union, its effects on labor law and social dialogue and its impact on the European social model. Rudi Delarue, ILO-Brussels Director, will address this conference, highlighting the ILO dimension.

Scheduled meetings

List of scheduled ILO meetings

Contact us

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