

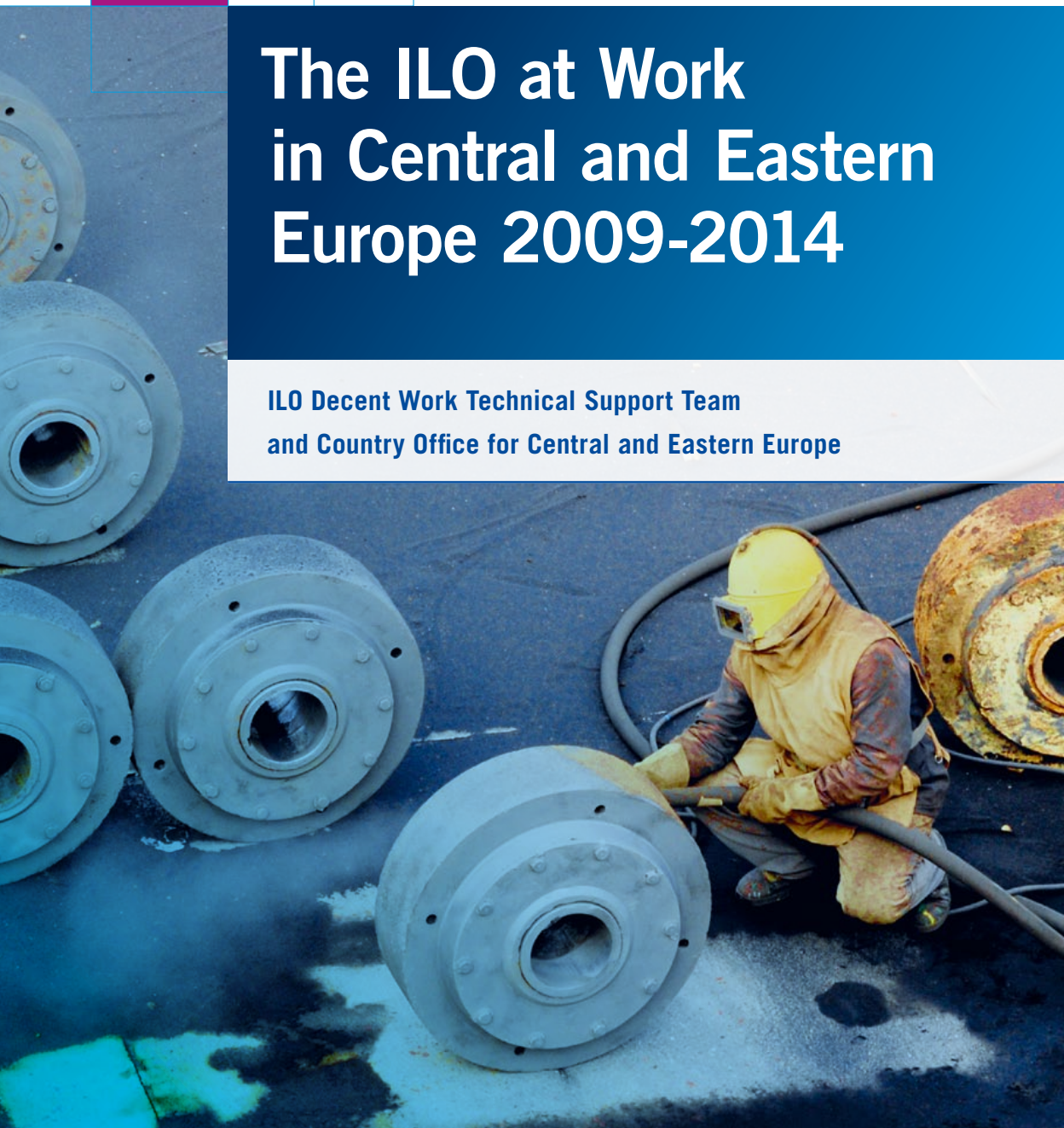


International
Labour
Organization

EMPLOYMENT
PROMOTION

The ILO at Work in Central and Eastern Europe 2009-2014

**ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team
and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe**



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Industrial
rope access
/ Vladimir
Mladenovic
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This publication is a collection of good practices and outputs of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) activities in Central and Eastern Europe. In the 18 countries¹ in the sub-region as well as in Kosovo², the ILO is the authoritative source of advisory services and technical assistance to governments and to employers' and workers' organizations in diverse areas related to rights at work, employment, social protection, social dialogue and gender equality.

The ILO in Central and Eastern Europe

The ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe was established in 1993 and is based in Budapest. In the past, the main task of the ILO Budapest team was to assist its member states in their economic and labour market transformation after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The ILO played a major role in establishing labour market institutions and social dialogue in the new market economies. Independent trade unions and employers' organizations, which had not existed before 1989, were also formed with the assistance of the ILO. Today, the ILO's main mission in the sub-region is to provide policy advice and to support capacity development in South East Europe, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the framework of Decent Work Country Programmes. Also, the ILO pursues an active policy dialogue with EU member countries and institutions to ensure the creation of more and better jobs in the context of economic crisis recovery. The ILO works in close partnership with the other UN agencies, the EU and other organizations.

Assisting countries on their way to the European Union

The countries in Central and Eastern Europe greatly differ from each other. In May 2004, eight countries from the sub-region became EU members, joined by Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007 and Croatia in 2013. The priorities of these countries were shaped by their EU membership while other countries from South-Eastern Europe are seeking accession and facing challenges to align their employment and social policies with those of the EU. The regional integration process continues to play a major role in the sub-region.

One of the most important developments in Central and Eastern Europe is that some EU member states have become donor countries helping others to enhance their working and social conditions. Since 2009 the Czech Republic supported the Republic of Moldova in improving the design, monitoring and evaluation of gender-sensitive employment policies and facilitating the reintegration of return labour migrants. Romania helped the Republic of Moldova build capacity for social security

¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine.
² as defined by the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1244 of 1999.

coordination for migrant workers. Poland contributed to reinforce the institutional basis of social dialogue in Ukraine and supports the Ukrainian labour inspection reform.

The countries in South-Eastern Europe still have a great amount of work ahead to improve the conditions for social partners to engage in meaningful social dialogue, create new employment opportunities, particularly for youth, improve occupational safety and health standards and the sustainability of social security schemes, promote equal opportunities as well as to formalize the widespread informal economy. The ILO has supported and will support these countries to take steps forward in providing decent work opportunities, complying with the law and promoting sustainable changes in the labour markets amidst a complex sub-regional context.

In response to the financial and economic crisis, the ILO has also assisted to stimulate economic recovery, create jobs and protect working people and their families. While some countries are successfully recovering from the crisis, with stable or improving labour markets, the most severely affected countries have seen unemployment rise to unprecedented levels, particularly for young men and women.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CENTRAL AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE (NON-EU)

- GDP growth was relatively robust in this region and the CIS following the onset of the crisis, averaging over 4 per cent per annum since 2009.
- A number of countries in the region, particularly in the Balkans, continue to have very high unemployment rates, over 20 per cent in most cases.
- Youth unemployment is particularly high in three countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – exceeding the 50 per cent rate.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina almost two in three young people are jobless.
- Male wages exceed female wages on average by 23 per cent in the Western Balkan³

Promoting national and international development objectives through Decent Work Country Programmes

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) are the operational framework for ILO activities in a given country. They constitute a programming tool to deliver on a limited number of priorities over a defined period within a more visible and transparent strategy in order to maximize the impact of the ILO's work. These country programmes are always developed in a participatory manner through close consultations between the government and social partners who jointly define main

³ ILO: *Global Employment Trends 2014 – Risk of a jobless recovery?* (Geneva, ILO, 2014) p. 45.

priorities and expected results based on national development objectives and international development agendas (such as the Millennium Development Goals and the countries' UN Development Assistance Framework). These cooperation agreements are jointly implemented and monitored by the ILO and national constituents followed by a thorough evaluation of all participants.

The ILO developed the first generation of Decent Work Country Programmes in the sub-region between 2006–2007 for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, with Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia joining the list of countries with Decent Work Country Programmes implemented at later dates.

A SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION – EXAMPLE OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The first Decent Work Country Program for The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was developed for the period of 2010–2013 through extensive tripartite consultations with the involvement of the ILO. According to a recently conducted evaluation, five out of the six expected outcomes were fully achieved. Achievements include:

- A new Economic and Social Council was established in August 2010 by a tripartite agreement concluded with the support of the ILO. This agreement granted the tripartite council greater role in policy-making.
- Seven ILO Conventions were ratified by The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia at the initiative of the Economic and Social Council.
- For the first time, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia regulated its minimum wage to ensure security of income for most vulnerable groups of workers as a result of the ILO technical advice and assistance.⁴
- More than 20,000 young people from all over the country benefited from the implementation of the first ever National Action Plan on Youth Employment developed with the ILO's support in 2012. The ILO and the National Statistical Office elaborated and conducted a school-to-work transition survey of young people aged 15–29 in 2012 and 2014. The findings will support policymakers in designing adequate instruments to support the employment of young people.
- The Organization of Employers of Macedonia and the Business Confederation of Macedonia developed a Strategic Policy Framework with the support of the ILO in order to improve the business climate for sustainable enterprises.

⁴ Please see the whole story on page 26.

Helping countries recover from the crisis

The financial and economic crisis has affected most countries in South-Eastern Europe. The ILO analysed the trends that led to the crisis and provided concrete policy recommendations in a number of Balkan countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia – and some new EU Member States – Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania.⁵

The ILO emphasized that fiscal consolidation measures and large scale wage moderation contributed to increasing income inequalities and greater vulnerability of workers at the bottom of the wage scale (particularly young workers, women and low-skilled workers).⁶

Some countries, such as Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, faced significant challenges in mitigating the negative effects of the economic downturn. In response, the ILO promoted the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact. The Global Jobs Pact, adopted in 2009, is a set of job-centred policy measures for countries to ease the impact of the crisis and accelerate recovery

in employment. The anti-crisis packages developed through the pact offered special solutions for social protection, employment and decent job creation in labour markets particularly vulnerable to external shocks.

Another objective was the creation of a regional knowledge base on policy options to be used by ILO constituents. In Ukraine, three ILO studies were prepared that included key policy recommendations on social security; wages, income distribution and the tax system; as well as economic diversification in the metal industry and tourism.⁷ A National Tripartite Agreement of Ukraine was developed based on the ILO Global Jobs Pact and signed by Ukrainian government and employers and trade unions in 2012 to improve the situation of the labour market.



*Crossway – Roma youngsters in Serbia waiting to make some money by washing windshields for people who are willing to pay them.
/ Marko Krstic © ILO 2013*

⁵ V. Corbanese: *Supporting strategies to recover from the crisis in Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia: cross-country report* (Budapest, ILO, 2011).

⁶ V. Schmidt and D. Vaughan-Whitehead (eds.): *The impact of the crisis on wages in South-East Europe* (Budapest, ILO, 2012).

⁷ G. T. Kulikov, V. V. Blyzniuk: *Impact of the financial and economic crisis on wages, income distribution and the tax system* (Budapest, ILO, 2010). ILO: *Assessment of the social security system in Ukraine 2008–09 crisis response and future reforms* (Budapest, 2010). ILO: *Promoting economic diversity in Ukraine: the role of the business enabling environment, skills policies and export promotion* (Budapest, 2010).



Time for youth! – Any job is better than the alternative for this university graduate selling pies in Krakow, Poland. She could not find a job in her professional area. / Jacek Cisto © ILO 2010

The Bulgarian government, employers' and workers' organizations requested the ILO's technical expertise to reduce the worst effects of the crisis. The ILO prepared a Global Jobs Pact country scan⁸ examining the country situation and policy responses in Bulgaria, using the pact as a framework of analysis and providing reliable country-specific data for the development of effective measures in the national policy dialogue. An ILO/IMF tripartite conference on crisis recovery measures took place in July 2012 with participation of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and the social partners, European Commission, World Bank, ITUC, ILO and IMF discussing analysis of the current situation in Bulgaria and suggestions for action to create jobs.

To provide a roadmap for inclusive growth after the economic, social and political consequences of the crisis, the Oslo Declaration, "*Restoring confidence in jobs and growth*,"⁹ was adopted at the ILO's 9th European Regional Meeting in Norway in April 2013 by government, employers' and workers' delegates from 51 European and Central Asian ILO member states.

The Oslo Declaration has had a lasting impact: it has resulted in the ILO's responding to calls for assistance from constituents in a number of countries in the Eurozone. To learn more about trends and policy responses to the Eurozone job crisis, the ILO published a study that led to a recommendation to create youth employment guarantee schemes, including estimates of how much this would cost: "*Eurozone job crisis: Trends and policy responses*".¹⁰

⁸ ILO: *Global Jobs Pact country scan: Bulgaria* (Geneva, 2011).

⁹ ILO: The Oslo Declaration: *Restoring confidence in jobs and growth* (Geneva, 2013), www.ilo.org/global/meetings-and-events/regional-meetings/europe-and-central-asia/term-9/WCMS_210356/lang-en/index.htm, retrieved on 10 March 2015.

¹⁰ ILO: *Eurozone job crisis: Trends and policy responses* (Geneva, 2012).



Miner / Anatoliy Alishevskiy © ILO 2004, Ukraine. This picture was awarded the 'Central and Eastern Europe Best Photo' prize of the ILO 'Work4Youth' Photo Contest.

Decent work for inclusive growth: Focus on young people

The ILO and the EU have partnered on employment and social affairs on a long standing basis. The ILO provided technical input for the development of the European Youth Guarantee Scheme adopted by the EU, under which member states agreed to implement measures to ensure young people up to the age of 25 are offered good quality employment, continuing education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship, within four months of becoming unemployed.¹¹

ILO assisting in job creation for youth in Albania

Young people face difficult challenges in the Albanian labour market. 33.5 per cent of young adults between ages of 15–29 were unemployed in 2014,¹² with a low employment of women and high number of long-term and discouraged jobseekers. The main cause of unemployment is often the lack of professional qualifications.

To address these problems, the ILO has assisted Albania in three main areas: developing a national employment and skills strategy, offering a new model of employment offices and reforming the technical vocational training and education (TVET) system.

The 2014–2020 National Employment and Skills Strategy gives Albania a clear policy framework designed to respond to the actual labour market needs through a more effective TVET system. The Strategy and its Action Plan focus on social inclusion and territorial cohesion, the reduction of long-term unemployment and youth unemployment rates, as well as on strengthening the effectiveness of labour market policies and services.

¹¹ ILO slideshow: www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/photo-slideshows/slideshows/rich/WCMS_307849_EN/lang--en/index.htm?shared_from=media-mail

¹² According to the Labour Force Survey of INSTAT, available at www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/labour-market.aspx. retrieved on 1 October 2014.



Young people visiting the employment office in Tirana, Albania
© ILO



Edmond Aliaj (46 years old) received a job offer from one of the modernised employment offices in Albania © ILO



ILO OFFERED ITS EXPERTISE to develop a new model of service delivery in public employment offices. Since the first office was established in Tirana, in January 2014, nine other employment offices were modernised.

The process aims to cover all 12 regions of the country.

From January to July 2014, 6,344 people found jobs through these offices, including long-term unemployed jobseekers, people with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, and Albanian migrant workers recently returning from abroad. Since the crisis broke out in Greece and Italy, an estimated number of 130,000 Albanian emigrants¹³ have returned home. Many of them are fighting an uphill battle to re-enter the job market in Albania. Edmond Aliaj (46 years old) spent 17 years of his life in Italy, but after the economic crisis he lost his job in the logistics department of an Italian company. *"I was obliged to move back to Albania. I was addressed to the employment office in Tirana and just a week later I received an unexpected offer for exactly the same kind of job I held in Milano."* – he says.

¹³ www.instat.gov.al/media/255982/return_migration_and_reintegration_in_albania_2013.pdf, retrieved on 29 January 2015.

The ILO also helped to adjust vocational training opportunities to the actual needs of employers. Four new frame curricula were proposed for training programmes in the maritime services, the agro-food processing sector, the textile and footwear industry, as well as for VET teachers' and instructors' courses. Further innovative solutions were offered as the recognition of prior learning mechanisms.

A new TV show, called *Made in Albania* (www.madeinalbania.al) was also produced to help young Albanians to find out what jobs are best suited to their skills and interests, and how to acquire the missing skills and qualifications. The show invited viewers to discover competitive professions varying from hotel cook, web developer, to fruit plantation worker and fisherman, and presented corresponding vocational education and training institutions. The inter-



Genti Bejko, a popular Albanian actor and director as an ambitious job-seeker in the "Made in Albania" TV show
/ ANIMA Pictures © ILO

ventions are proving to be successful. For the 2014–2015 school year, the number of enrolled students in vocational education and training programmes has increased by 40 per cent.

In addition to efforts that foster changes across the whole country, the ILO put a strong emphasis on Albania's regional development in the framework of the implementation of Territorial Employment Pacts (TEP) as a policy instrument in action. The Territorial Employment Pact is a contractual partnership that brings together local actors to identify common objectives and assume complemen-

tary roles and responsibilities. The country's first Territorial Employment Pact for Youth ever was implemented by the ILO in 2011 in Kukës.

The new pacts prioritizing youth employment and the reduction of informal employment in agriculture, tourism, fishery and handicraft sectors target the regions of Lezha, Shkodra and Kukës, some of the poorest areas of Albania. In these three northern parts of the country, youth unemployment rates are particularly high, amounting to 36, 32 and 29 per cents respectively.

Over 450 of the most marginalized Albanian young people living in these remote areas received technical training and financial support to enhance their employability, formalize their jobs and start new businesses. Two youth cooperatives created for turkey breeding in Lezha and chestnut cultivation in Kukës are amongst the most successful initiatives. In Lezha, young people from Kashnjet, a very remote mountainous area, were trained on sustainable agriculture, whilst a joint action of local young fishermen and the Fishing Management Organization was to clean the Shkodra Lake, the largest in the entire Balkan Peninsula.



Youths from Kolsh village in Lezha are planting medicinal and aromatic herbs
/ Gjergj Erebara
© ILO-UNDP

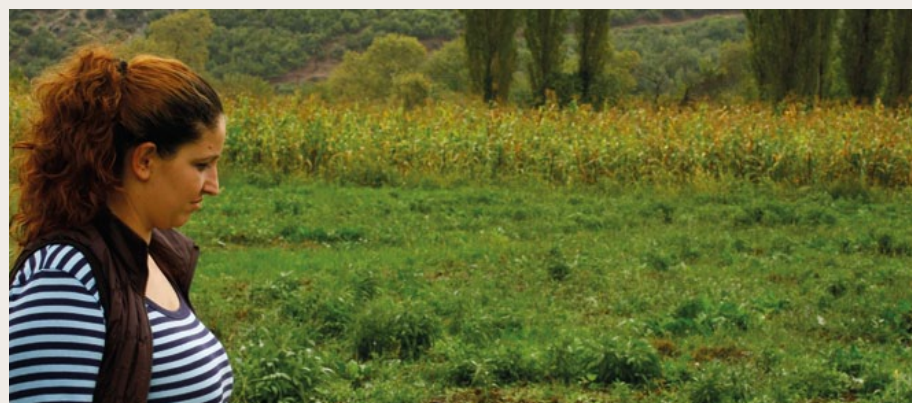
Local fisherman is cleaning the Shkodra lake from lost nets that would continue to catch fish
/ Gjergj Erebara
© ILO-UNDP



Training on chestnuts cultivation in Petkaj village, Kukës
/ Gjergj Erebara
© ILO-UNDP



IN KUKËS, a mountainous region located near the border with Kosovo, arable land is not easy to find. When Erlis Shehu chose to clear the small plot that his father had bought in 1995 in the village of Shtjefan, he received financial and technical assistance from the ILO to cultivate sage and set up his own business. Removing rocks from the soil was a painstaking process, but his hard work has paid off and he could plant sage in the field. *"It's the best way to make use of this land," he said. "Sage does not need a particularly fertile soil."*

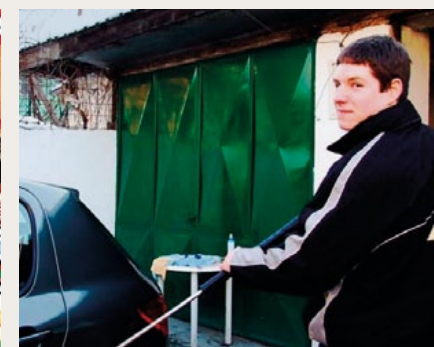


Jorilda Pepa received training and financial support through the Territorial Employment Pacts to cultivate the land of the family in the village of Malci, Lezha region / Gjergj Erebara © ILO-UNDP

→ **THE TERRITORIAL EMPLOYMENT PACTS** also helped others to seek new opportunities. Jorilda and Edi Pepa lead a stable life working in the bustling tourism industry on the island of Santorini until the crisis. With no job prospects in sight in Greece, they returned to Albania, to their home village of Malci, where Edi's family owned a piece of land that had not been in use for several years. Returning the land to a productive state required know-how and the investment of capital, none of which the young couple had readily available. The challenges did not discourage them. With the support of the ILO, they completed a training about the cultivation of medical and aromatic plants and learnt how to launch a business. They also received support to purchase the sage seedlings. They harvested their first batch in the autumn of 2014. *"Our goal for next year is to plant lavender as well, and start beekeeping,"* said Jorilda.



Dragana Milanovic
© United Nations in Serbia



Aleksandar Jovanovic
© United Nations in Serbia

THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUND IN SERBIA



In Serbia the youth unemployment rate was over 50 per cent in 2013.¹⁴ The ILO worked with other UN agencies, the Government and social partners for the development and implementation of the National Youth Employment Policy and Action Plan and the establishment of a Youth Employment Fund (YEF). Some 2,247 young beneficiaries participated in the activities of the Fund, and either found a job, opened their own businesses, or used the skills acquired through on-the-job training. 167 young people opened their own businesses. *"The greatest success of this project is witnessing individual cases of satisfied young people who, having been registered with the unemployment office for, say, 14 years, are finally working or gaining new knowledge and skill,"* said Natasa Ivanovic, employment advisor of the Fund.

After Aleksandar Jovanovic's parents lost their jobs, his family was without any income for months. Today, they are helping him run his car wash, which provides the family with a steady income. *"I am proud of my business,"* said Aleksandar. 658 young people have found new jobs after Fund sponsored training. *"Coming from a difficult family situation, I wanted to be a better parent, a good father and through this opportunity, I have permanent, full time employment,"* said Nenad, who found a job at a local grain storage company in Backa Palanka.

"I am happy that I obtained full-time employment after completing a YEF-sponsored training with Pasin Farm, a local coffee roasting, packing and retail company in Backa Palanka." – Dragana Milanovic (23)

¹⁴ ILO: *Global Employment Trends 2014 – Risk of a jobless recovery?* (Geneva, ILO, 2014) p. 45.

Several awareness raising campaigns were also organized to highlight the challenges young people face at the labour market. The ILO organized a global photo contest, Work4Youth, with a special focus on – and special prizes for – Central and Eastern Europe. In Albania, at least 3,500 young people were informed about their rights at work during an information campaign in 2012.

Bringing green jobs and recycling to the forefront

The ILO is taking steps to incorporate green economy initiatives into its efforts to boost employment globally. Green jobs are an untapped source of employment in Central and Eastern European countries. Not only do they provide income to a number of people, they also contribute to the transition to an environmentally-conscious and sustainable economy. One example of how this works in practice took place in Albania.

Albanian enterprises rarely find plastic readily available for their products in the country and they are forced to import the material from abroad. The industry needs a lot more plastic for their



Young Albanians learning about recycling © UN Albania

products. Recycling plastic, from collection to sorting and processing in recycling plants, has the potential to become an important source of employment for many Albanians. A group of youth from the neighbourhood of Kombinat to Kep i Rodonit were taken to the shores of Albania to learn about the negative effects of plastic waste on the environment and the recycling process that can generate green employment opportunities.

"We have learned how to select and sort the plastic bottles. We have also talked about recycling to our families and from now on, we will collect waste differently." – said Gjyste Paloka, participant of the action. By teaching them the steps of waste management, young Albanians recognize the importance of recycled materials in the economy and the labour market.

Helping people with disabilities to find a job

There are nearly 2.5 million people with disabilities living in Ukraine today, surrounded by discrimination and social stigma. In 2008 only one in three of working age persons were permanently employed. A new job placement model and methodology, developed by the ILO, the UNDP and the Public Employment Service of Ukraine, introduced an individual approach towards every person living with a physical, sensory and mental disability to dispel the myth that they would be professionally uncompetitive.

Following the implementation of the new model and methodology in seven pilot employment centres, the job placement rate has increased from 24 to 33 per cent. People with disabilities participated in training, vocational and labour rehabilitation and received psychological support. More than 18,500 employers were educated on workplace accommodation and employment of people with disabilities. In total, nearly 3,000 men and women were employed through these centres.

Disability rights still remain a priority in Ukraine as more employment centres are adopting the new model across the nation. Therefore the ILO together with UNDP also proposed amendments to existing regulations, as well as recommendations on harmonizing laws with international standards and best practices to promote the active integration of people with disabilities into the labour market.



Ruslan Kurylko working in his new job found through one of the pilot employment centres © UNDP Ukraine



RUSLAN KURLKO (31), from the town of Boyarka near Kyiv lives with a disability since birth. After the economic crisis, he closed his small construction business and tried to find a paid job. However, his health certificate classifying his skills suitable for a security guard job narrowed the range of available positions for him. The trained workers of a local centre were able to match Ruslan's profile and skills with a vacancy. Now he holds a job as an automotive parts sales manager.

Promoting gender equality

Despite Ukrainian legislation's achievements in securing equal rights for men and women, the realization of gender policy and women's employment rights are far from being completed in Ukraine.

Starting in the wake of the global economic crisis in 2009, the ILO supported Ukraine in the development of a new national programme for gender equality for 2011–2016 and in the preparation of amendments to the law on equal rights for women and men.

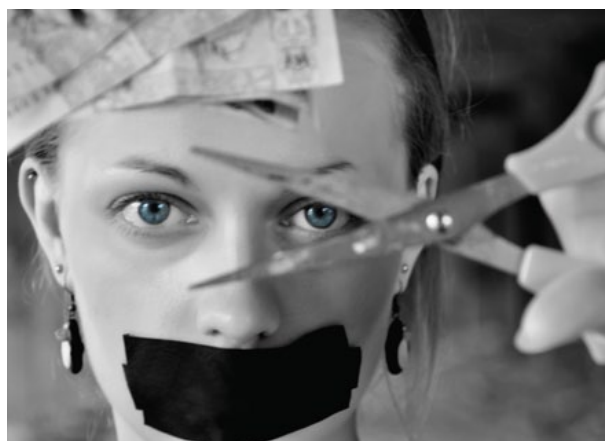
A series of training activities targeting 280 labour inspectors across the country promoted gender equality in the labour inspection system. Twenty-four gender audit facilitators were trained to conduct audits in organizations. More than 30 training tools were adapted to the Ukrainian context to train over 900 labour administration staff, while around 600 workers mastered the tools on gender mainstreaming in collective bargaining and non-discrimination at work.

300 employers' representatives learnt how to create balanced employment opportunities at the workplace. The first ever Ukrainian gender equality plans were developed in four companies and five others were honoured for their best practices in promoting gender equality in a competition organized with participation of 90 Ukrainian enterprises and organizations.

More than 900 women entrepreneurs had the chance to develop advanced skills on smart business operations in the ILO's Start and Improve Your Business programmes. Every fifth trainee started their own business and every tenth participant found a new employment.



I can do it!
/ Zoltán Szabó © ILO 2013



Salary / Lidiia Kozhevnikova © ILO.
This photo was awarded the 'Youth' prize of the ILO 'Work4Youth' photo contest.



Larysa Sereduk
© ILO



LARYSA SEREDUK (centre) was one of the beneficiaries of this women entrepreneurship program in Ukraine. The ILO's programme gave her the capacity and skills to start and improve a successful business. She also co-founded a training centre and an initiative to support entrepreneurship in her home community: *"When I signed up for the Start and Improve Your Business course I could not believe my success would become a source of inspiration for others, leading to new business opportunities for my community!"*

Combating child labour

The ILO estimates that 22,000 children died at work every year in the world. The number of those injured or ill because of their work are not known¹⁵. Since 2000, the ILO has provided direct services to over 19,000 child labourers and children at risk in Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo (as defined by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 1999, hereafter Kosovo), the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.¹⁶ The ILO projects have reinforced the legal and policy frameworks of these countries to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labour in line with key ILO Conventions (No. 138 and No. 182).

¹⁵ www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/WorstFormsofChildLabour/Hazardouschildlabour/lang--en/index.htm, retrieved on 29 January 2015.

¹⁶ ILO: Accelerating action against child labour: Global report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work, Report of the Director-General (Geneva, 2010).

THE ILO CONVENTION NO. 182 DEFINES THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR AS

- All types of slavery, including the sale and trafficking of children; forced labour to pay off a debt; any other type of forced labour, including using children in war and armed conflict;
- All activities which sexually exploited children, such as prostitution, pornography or pornographic performances;
- Any involvement in illegal activities, especially the production or trafficking of drugs;
- Any work which could damage the health, safety or well-being of children (so called “hazardous work”).

Special intervention models were tested including components of employment promotion, peer education, life skills development and psycho-social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking. Child Labour Monitoring Systems were developed in all participating countries to identify child labourers and children at risk to enter the worst forms of child labour, refer them to services and track them to ensure that they have satisfactory alternatives. The monitoring systems are based on a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach and cover all children living in a given geographical area.

The knowledge base was also increased with Child Labour Surveys conducted in Albania and the Republic of Moldova¹⁷ in addition to more than 20 manuals and guidelines so far used for capacity building with governments, social partners and implementing partners.

The Code of Conduct for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour for employers in all sectors was approved by the Moldovan Global Compact Network in December 2008 with the active involvement of the ILO. The Code helps network members to take responsibility for the impact of their activities on children and their future, implement concrete measures and share good practices. The Code also helped to reduce child labour in Moldova’s vast agricultural sector, one of the most dangerous for children.

“The reaction of trade unions was positive. Everyone understands that by protecting children against child labour today, we will have a healthier generation in the future.” – said Stela Ciobanu, Chairperson of the AGROINDSIND Trade Union.

¹⁷ ILO: *Working children in the Republic of Moldova: The results of the 2009 children’s activities survey* (Chisinau, 2010). ILO: *Working children in the Republic of Albania: the results of the 2010 national child labour survey* = *Fëmijët që punojnë në Republikën e Shqipërisë: Rezultatet e studimit kombëtar mbi punën e fëmijëve për vitin 2010* (Geneva, 2012).

Portrait of a street seller child. Chisinau market place, the Republic of Moldova / M. Crozet © ILO



➔ Poverty pushes a high number of children in Kosovo¹⁸ to drop out of school and enter child labour as early as ten years old to support their families. Working at a dumpsite or in agriculture, they risk their health and even their lives and for many of them combining school and work becomes a major challenge. The ILO supported efforts of Kosovo's public institutions and social partners to eliminate child labour, with an emphasis on its worst



The final event of a series of grassroots football activities was organized in Prishtina on 12th of June 2010 with 178 children at risk and children involved in the worst forms of child labour

forms. A total number of 327 children (257 boys and 70 girls) were withdrawn from hazardous child labour in Kosovo and another 363 children (235 boys and 128 girls) were prevented from entering child labour between 2005 and 2009. Main services provided to children included catch up classes, after school classes, family counselling, career guidance, mentoring or tutoring, vocational educational training, in-company training, job placement for children of legal working age and material support like clothes, books, school supplies and other.

➔ Since 2010 the ILO has been working at policy level, delivering capacity building services and organizing awareness raising activities to combat child labour in Kosovo. The Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour developed for the period of 2011–2016 gives a framework for an action plan and policies to achieve this objective by 2016. As of March 2013 the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC) obliges members to observe the ILO's four fundamental labour principles, including freedom of association and the elimination of child labour, forced labour and discrimination at work. The Chamber of Commerce, with ILO support, prepared reports on the situation of child labour in companies and their supply chains which were used to mobilize members to take effective measures to prevent child labour. As a result, forty members of the Chamber adopted codes of conduct on combating child labour in their supply chains and communities, while the KCC itself adopted a Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour 2014–2020. What's more, occupational safety and health issues will be mainstreamed into curricula of compulsory education (grades 8–9) and upper secondary schools with ILO support. It will start to be taught with the new school year 2015–2016. Counselling of farmers on hazardous child labour in agriculture was also included in the training modules of agriculture advisory services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development.

18 *as defined by UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 1999, hereafter named as "Kosovo"

Modernizing labour legislation and strengthening social dialogue

The system of industrial relations in South-East Europe is still characterized by the predominance of tripartite consultation at policy level as compared to bipartite social dialogue and collective bargaining. Over the past few years an improved infrastructure for tripartite consultation at policy level was put in place in most countries of the Western Balkan and Moldova. This was supported by a wide ratification of fundamental ILO conventions No. 87 and 98¹⁹ and Governance Convention No. 144. The legal and institutional framework for tripartite social dialogue was enhanced in countries such as Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro with the support of the ILO.

- In **Albania**, the National Labour Council improved its functioning and discussed important issues such as the impact of the global economic downturn and crisis recovery and issued several recommendations on topics like the budget law, minimum wages, energy prices, ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions.
- The National Commission for Collective Consultations and Bargaining (NCCCB) of the Republic of **Moldova** debated important social, economic and budgetary draft regulations since 2010, such as the law on the state budget, the law on social security budget and the National Action Plan to fight undeclared work. The Commission also hosted discussions on tripartite coordinated actions aiming at harmonizing current labour law provisions with international standards, including on the national labour inspection system, occupational safety and health, employment, minimum wage, vocational education and training amongst others.
- The Social Council of **Montenegro** was able to better organize its activity and to raise its national profile thanks to the legal personality and earmarked budget granted by the newly amended regulation. The government of Montenegro committed to the EU accession process and the overall social cohesion of the country.

19 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).



Signature of agreement establishing the council in August 2010

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND ESTABLISHING MINIMUM WAGE IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



A tripartite agreement in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, concluded with the support of the ILO, established the Economic and Social Council in August 2010. This agreement, which represented a significant advance in national social dialogue, granted the tripartite Council greater autonomy in policy-making. It is now mandatory to consider the opinion of the Council on laws in labour relations, employment, pensions and disability insurance, and occupational safety and health. Government ministries have the legal obligation to provide feedback on the Council's opinions, recommendations and proposals. Although the ILO Minimum Wage Fixing Convention No. 131 had been ratified in 1993, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia did not have a statutory minimum wage nor a mechanism for its negotiation. To put the issue on the agenda, the ILO conducted several studies, conferences on wages and provided technical assistance to the Economic and Social Council. The Council agreed on the country's first national minimum wage in October 2011. The law was adopted by the Parliament and came into force in 2012.

Since then, the ILO continued to provide technical assistance on this topic. A study analysing the minimum wage's effect on a series of economic indicators was presented to tripartite constituents in 2013. As a result, the Government adopted policy measures to enhance the effectiveness of the minimum wage. Following tripartite negotiations, the Law on Minimum Wage was amended in February 2014 and the minimum net wage was increased from 8,050 denars to 8,800 denars. In 2015 and 2016, the ILO will continue to build the capacity of the Economic and Social Council on the minimum wage setting mechanism in line with ILO Convention No. 131.

New alternative systems for the peaceful settlement of labour disputes were created in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska) and Montenegro with the ILO's direct assistance. The existing system of amicable labour dispute settlement mechanism has been strengthened in Serbia.

- The Agency for Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes became operational in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (Republika Srpska) in 2010. The ILO enhanced the skills of mediators who helped to conclude 149 out of 186 individual labour disputes in 2013, and 598 out of 676 in 2014. In addition to the resolved individual labour disputes in 2014, the Agency helped the resolution of 10 collective disputes out of 12, thus contributing to the realization of labour rights of 900 workers in 2014. The success rate of resolving labour disputes increased to 88.46 per cent in 2014 against 47 per cent in 2011 and 25 per cent in 2010.
- The Agency for Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes of **Montenegro** started to work in September 2010 thanks to capacity building activities provided by the ILO. From September 2010 until December 2013, the Agency received 6,929 requests for amicable settlement of labour disputes, out of which 6,914 for individual disputes and 15 for collective. Agreements were facilitated by the Agency in 83 per cent of the cases.
- In **Serbia**, the competencies of the Agency for Peaceful Resolution of Labour Disputes were expanded and the number of mediators and arbiters was doubled up to forty. Its competences now cover arbitration in individual disputes and mediation in collective labour disputes. The Serbian Agency solved over 4,000 both individual and collective labour disputes since its creation in 2004 until 2013.

The ILO regularly responds to requests for advice on implementation of international labour standards and conformity of possible changes in national labour legislation from numerous countries in the region, most recently from Albania, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Technical assistance is also being provided in the areas of apprenticeship, labour inspection, with a focus on undeclared work, social economy, labour regulations, including employment relationship, collective dismissals and non-standard forms of employment.

In **Ukraine**, the ILO provided technical comments on the draft Labour Code and social dialogue legislation, as well as on Collective Agreements Act and Employers' Organizations Act. Tripartite Social dialogue and collective bargaining practices have been improved on both the national and sectoral levels. For instance, a tripartite social pact was concluded at the national level, and the sectoral collective agreement in the mining industry was amended based on ILO recommendations in early 2013.

Social dialogue legal framework was reformed with the adoption of a new Law on Social Dialogue and amendments to the outdated Law on Collective Bargaining (from 1993). In 2012 a new consultative body, the Public Council, was established under the Labour Inspectorate with the participation of unions and employers.

In the Republic of **Moldova**, a case law database was created with the support of the ILO in order to improve the discharge of reporting obligation on international labour standards by the government. Through the database, legal experts are able to quickly and effectively generate statistical reports on labour litigations, access information and statistical data on the application of fundamental labour standards by national judges, access digitalized files of labour litigations (for example audio recordings of court hearings in the Republic of Moldova).

Helping workers to move to formal employment

- ILO studies²⁰ conducted in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and Montenegro found that the informal economy is a widespread problem in the region.
- In Montenegro over 30 per cent of the workforce in the overall economy was informally employed in 2010.
- At least 30 per cent of the total workforce was employed informally in the construction sector of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- In the Republic of Moldova, the level of informal employment of workers between ages of 15 and 24 and between 25 and 34 was higher than the level of formal employment for these groups.
- The highest percentage of informal workers working in formal businesses was found in Montenegro (77 per cent), followed by the Republic of Moldova (33 per cent).
- Over 60 per cent of informal workers were self-employed in the Republic of Moldova (especially in agriculture), while 29 per cent worked as self-employed in Albania and 16 per cent in Montenegro.

In the fight against the informal sector the ILO focused on encouraging governments, employers' and workers' organizations to develop common action plans that address the decent work deficit, undeclared work and poverty. Self-employed and micro and small enterprises, mainly in agriculture and construction sectors, were identified as economic units being most exposed to informal employment.

²⁰ C. Mihes et al.: *A comparative overview of informal employment in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and Montenegro* (Budapest, ILO, 2011).

Workers in atypical forms of employment, which are not or partially protected by national labour legislation (e. g. casual workers, rural workers, family workers, workers employed in various types of temporary employment), low skilled workers, youth and older workers, long term unemployed and women are at most risk of being informally employed and thus unprotected.

To diminish the role women play in the informal economy, employers in the Republic of Moldova established a Business Women's Association in 2009 to help women entrepreneurs move to the formal economy and ensure that women entrepreneurs are involved in the issues affecting business.

The ILO suggested legislative changes to promote formal employment in the area of labour inspection (Albania and Montenegro), employment relations (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro) and occupational safety and health (Albania). The employers, workers and the government in Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated a coordination board for combating undeclared work both at the entity and the state level. Free phone lines for reporting undeclared work incidents were established in Albania and Montenegro. A number of awareness campaigns on the negative consequences of undeclared work have targeted the general public, workers and employers in these countries.

Political will and inclusive horizontal and vertical alliances of all concerned stakeholders proved to be crucial in the fight against undeclared work. The appropriate response to increasing informal employment in the region is a holistic and integrated intervention of labour administrations, where national social partners actively participate, in compliance with international labour standards.

Workers and businesses benefiting from better safety and health at work

Assistance from the ILO has contributed to the development of modern occupational safety and health (OSH) systems in the sub region where the lack of reliable data on working conditions and the high number of workplace accidents are a common challenge. The widespread informal economy also accounts for the underreporting of occupational accidents.

At the policy level, ILO legal and technical advice supported the improvement of national occupational safety and health programmes and laws in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine. In Albania, seventeen EU occupational health and safety directives were transposed into



Bridge boys – young Albanian men waiting for someone to offer them daily work / Brilanta Kadillari © ILO 2010

national law and labour inspectors received training on their implementation. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ILO assisted the two entities to align their related draft laws with the ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No 155) and with the EU's OSH Framework Directive 89/391/EEC. The ILO has also helped to strengthen the responsible institutions in order to establish preventive practices in enterprises, including more effective labour inspection services in Albania, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, as well as in Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In the Republic of Moldova constituents developed a National Plan of Action on Occupational Safety and Health, which will help promote a safety culture for all workers and employers and prevent accidents in the workplace once approved.

In Ukraine the ILO helped labour inspectors to develop a strategic plan and preventive measures through labour inspection campaigns. A new national programme on occupational safety and health was promoted in the country by the workers. The ILO also developed a software as a labour inspection tool to ensure effective risk-oriented monitoring. A database was produced using the harmonized statistical

indicators on labour inspection recommended by the ILO. Ukraine was the first country to use these indicators. A national campaign on labour inspection at work, combined with the workshops for employers' and workers' organizations, reached an estimated 200,000 persons²¹ in Ukraine and helped improve the quality of the services offered by labour inspectors.

Several awareness raising campaigns improved public understanding of prevention culture and the importance of compliance with occupational safety and health measures in Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In Vlahna, Albania, a village with one of the largest chromium reserves

Miners participating in workplace safety training in Vlahna, Albania
© UN Albania

in Europe, 40 miners received training in occupational safety and health as part of their recruitment. Agron Kraja, one of the participants found the training very useful: *"We are gaining an understanding of working in the mines; together with the threats and costs associated with the extraction of minerals. We are learning about rules that ensure technical safety. By not knowing these rules, the consequences would be catastrophic."*

Working conditions have been improved as a direct result of these campaigns. In the Republic of Moldova, more than 14,000 workers have experienced positive changes in their workplaces after the inspection visits in 2011. The newly trained inspectors recorded over 3,000 infringements of law.

21 ILO: *Legal framework and existing practices of collective bargaining in Ukraine* (Kyiv, 2012).

In Ukraine, some of the major companies have developed good practices and strategic approach to workplace safety. Inspection has entered into the daily work plans of labour inspectorates in these countries.

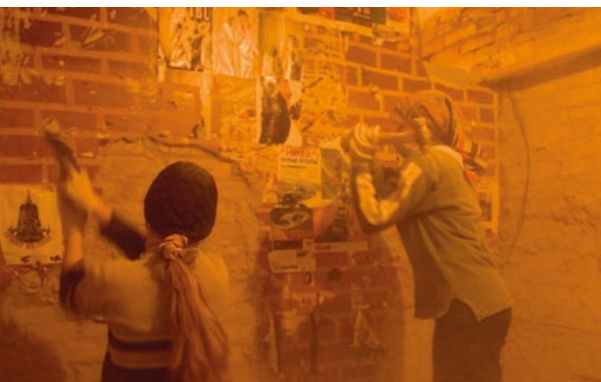
- Around 17,000 different materials (brochures, newsletters, audio-visual and multimedia presentations) were distributed in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.
- In the Republic of Moldova 183 undeclared workers were registered in two months in 2011.
- Moldovan authorities estimate a reduction of 35 to 40 per cent of work accidents in the agriculture sector.
- In the Republic of Moldova, the rate of work accidents has fallen over the last decade. In 2012 a total of 425 employees fell victim to occupational accidents, which is one third less than in 2003 following an annual decline.

Improving conditions for migrant workers

- 1.2 million Ukrainians were labour migrants between January 2010 and June 2012.
- 25 per cent of workers in the Republic of Moldova will work abroad at some point in their career

The ILO assisted the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in the formulation of migration strategies, the improvement of national databases and statistics on migration, the development of practical methods to assess labour market requirements, capacity building for social security agreements, and the establishment of procedures for the regularization of migration. The knowledge base was also expanded, covering the data gap on skills composition of migration flows, impact of migration on the labour market and on certain professions, the link between education and migration, as well as functioning of private employment agencies.²² Migration legislation was modified in Albania and the Republic of Moldova.

22 R. Sintov, N. Cojocar: *Assessment of links between education, training and labour migration in the Republic of Moldova* (Budapest, ILO, 2013). ILO: *Report on the methodology, organization and results of a modular sample survey on labour migration in Ukraine* (Budapest, 2013). R. J. C. Mansfield and N. Downey: *Proposals for the design and implementation of a system for the validation of informal learning to support the process of managed migration: options for Ukraine* (Budapest, ILO, 2013). G. Vakhitova, T. Coupe: *The relations between education and migration in Ukraine* (Budapest, ILO, 2013). O. Kupets: *International mobility of Ukrainian teaching and research professionals* (Budapest, ILO, 2013). G. Vakhitova: *Private employment agencies in Ukraine* (Budapest, ILO, 2013). A. Popa et al.: *Research and analysis of vacancies and skills needs in the European Union, in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine* (Budapest, ILO, 2013). *Labour Force Migration Surveys of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine*. Available on www.ilo.org/budapest/what-we-do/publications/WCMS_247459/lang-en/index.htm retrieved on 26 January 2015.



Young girls from
Moldavia employed
on a demolition site.
Podolsky district,
Moscow region
/ M. Crozet © ILO

A central issue in the regulation of labour migration is the definition of qualifications according to the receiving countries' standards or to any existing recognition mechanism. This would allow to facilitate migrants' integration and improve their living conditions. One achievement in this regard was the development of six occupational standards for blue collar workers by Moldovan constituents. Occupational standards describe the minimum standard to which an individual is expected to work in a given occupation and set out statement of competencies necessary to do the work. They offer a framework for vocational training and development.

Migrant workers face multiple disadvantages including the lack of social security coverage in the absence of proper coordination mechanisms between sending and receiving countries. To address this problem, support was provided to the government of Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova in negotiating and implementing social security agreements. As a result, Ukraine successfully concluded social security agreements with Poland, Portugal and Estonia while the Republic of Moldova negotiated similar bilateral agreements with Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania. The agreement with Hungary was signed in 2013. The ILO also helped Ukrainian and Moldovan governments to negotiate and sign a Protocol of Cooperation with Italian trade unions to ensure the protection of migrant workers' rights. 17 trade union leaders have become agents of change in Ukraine promoting the protection of migrant domestic workers who are particularly vulnerable to the risks of exploitation and abuse at work.

One of the basic principles of these social security agreements is the equal treatment of all workers to ensure that migrant workers are entitled to the same rights, obligations and social security benefits as nationals of the destination country. Also, social security agreements ensure that insurance periods in both signatory countries are taken into account when granting the social security benefits and that these benefits are exported abroad to the country of residence.



Veaceslav
Bicbaev
© ILO



25 per cent of workers in the Republic of Moldova will work abroad at some point in their career. However, few of them know that in many cases they are entitled to receive social security benefits from their destination countries once they go back home. An ILO campaign aimed to change that perception.

Veaceslav Bicbaev is a 65 year-old pensioner from the Republic of Moldova who worked in the Czech Republic three times at different periods of his life. *"When I retired and went back to Moldova, I tried to find out if I could receive my Czech pension. Things looked very complicated, so I dropped the idea,"* he says.

"But later an old colleague of mine told me that Moldova had signed an agreement on social security with the Czech Republic. I filled in all the necessary papers and now I receive my pension from the Czech Republic. This is a significant amount of money, especially since my Moldovan pension is small," he adds.

HIV and AIDS in the workplace

The HIV pandemic has become one of the most critical workplace issues of our time. In addition to its devastating impact on working women and men and their families and dependents, HIV affects the world of work in many ways. Stigma and discrimination against people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS threatens fundamental rights at work, undermining opportunities for people to obtain decent work and sustainable employment.

According to the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, more than 241,000 new cases of HIV infection were registered in Ukraine by November 2013.²³ Recognising HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue, the

²³ ILO: Дослідження доступу до програм соціального захисту та їх впливу на жінок і чоловіків, які живуть з ВІЛ і працюють, а також на членів їх сімей в Україні (Kiev, 2014).

ILO is piloting an effective approach to prevent HIV through targeted workplace programmes and to establish new partnerships between trade unions, enterprises and regional health centres. This new approach builds on the ILO's strength which lies in its access to the workplace through trade unions and employers' organizations.

As a result of ILO support and the active involvement and commitment of partners in Ukraine, the Cherkassy region has become a pioneer in setting up a network of enterprises that adopted HIV prevention programmes. In total, 13 enterprises and institutions launched HIV/AIDS workplace programmes and four enterprises adopted a Code of Conduct on HIV and AIDS. Over 5,000 employees, 1,300 students and 1,200 patients received information materials developed by the ILO. The number of employees to be covered has reached 10,000 in Ukraine, nearly half of them were women.

The second stage of the programme promoted the VCT@WORK initiative to encourage voluntary counselling and testing. The VCT@Work is part of the ILO's efforts to enable workers to know their HIV status and seek treatment, if necessary. Another ILO campaign on HIV and AIDS is the "Getting to Zero at Work" which aims at highlighting the contribution of the world of work in getting to Zero new HIV infections, Zero discrimination and Zero AIDS-related deaths. The campaign was joined by over 200 leaders from around the world. www.ilo.org/zero



Launch of the global ILO VCT@Work Campaign in Geneva, Switzerland © ILO

Employers' organizations and their member enterprises are reaching millions of workers, families and communities with their HIV initiatives. Together, we can get to zero. – Brent Wilton, Secretary-General, International Organization of Employers (IOE)

Zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths start at work. – Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Help to create more business friendly environment

In 2013 the ILO provided technical and financial support as well as guidance to employers' organizations in a number of countries to carry out assessment of the enabling environment for sustainable

enterprises, based on the ILO's evidence-based policy and advocacy toolkit. The Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprise (ESEE) toolkit,²⁴ endorsed at the 2007 International Labour Conference by governments, employers and workers, is the ILO's own assessment tool. It provides evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the business-enabling environment focusing on the political, economic, social and environmental aspects of doing business in a country and it assists employers' organizations in formulating policy recommendations.

In **Serbia**, the ILO provided training on the ESEE toolkit leading to the development of the ESEE report and evidence based position papers, and supported the execution of focus group meetings, a survey of 200 companies, a national validation workshop, the national launch of the ESEE report and a roundtable discussion with the media.

The assessment carried out by the Serbian Employers' Federation (SAE) served as a basis for the ESEE report in English and Serbian language.²⁵ The report contained key policy recommendations. Three position papers on labour law revision, taxation and trade inspections were also drafted in both English and Serbian.²⁶ The papers launched in July 2013 supported the advocacy agenda of the Serbian Employers' Federation.

One position paper argued for labour law improvements. In 2014 the government of Serbia adopted a set of changes and amendments to the existing Labour Law. The main changes included the extension of the maximum duration of fixed-term employment from 12 months to 24 months, as well as significant changes in calculation of redundancy entitlement and reduction in bureaucratic burdens (e. g. confirmation of annual leave for employee can now be delivered electronically.)

In the Republic of **Moldova**, a report on the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises was developed with ILO technical assistance. The ILO also supported focus group meetings and a survey of companies in early 2013. The English and Romanian language report²⁷ contained policy recommendations in the area of social dialogue, good governance, enabling legal and regulatory framework, education and training opportunities and lifelong learning.

The findings of the report were used by the National Confederation of Employers of the Republic of Moldova (CNPM) to develop a strategic policy framework entitled *Seven Obstacles for Business (2013)*. This framework was launched in late 2013 at the largest ever business summit in the Republic of Moldova organised by CNPM, attended by over 900 participants, including the Prime Minister. In September 2014, the confederation signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the government who committed

²⁴ eese-toolkit.ilo.org

²⁵ Serbian Association of Employers (SAE): *Assessing the environment for women's entrepreneurship in the Republic of Serbia* (Belgrade, 2013).

²⁶ Serbian Association of Employers (SAE): *Position Paper – Changes to the Trade Regulations and Reform of the Inspections* (Belgrade, 2013). Serbian Association of Employers (SAE): *Position Paper – Fiscal Burdening of Wage Income* (Belgrade, 2013). Serbian Association of Employers (SAE): *Position Paper – Changes to the Labour Law* (Belgrade, 2013).

²⁷ The National Confederation of Employers of the Republic of Moldova (CNPM): *Key constraints on the business environment in the Republic of Moldova* (Chisinau, 2013).



Peskar
/ Milorad Drča © ILO

to improve social dialogue and the business environment in the country. They also agreed to direct efforts at reducing the share of informal economy, unfair competition and corruption in the Republic of Moldova.

Stronger workers' organizations

In Central and Eastern European countries, the ILO works to strengthen the capacity of trade unions to promote effective collective bargaining and social dialogue mechanisms at all levels, including company, branch and national levels. In Serbia, training was offered to strengthen workers' capacities in the chemistry, energy and metal sectors. Capacity-building and awareness raising also proved successful in Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

A study,²⁸ completed in **Serbia** with the financial and technical support of the ILO, revealed the elements that prevent the functioning of collective bargaining in the country and recommended measures to tackle these challenges. Responding to the absence of mirror organizations, identified as one of the preventive circumstances, employers agreed to set up organizations that would serve as counterparts of existing workers' organizations at branch level. To close the skills gap detected on both the employers' and the workers' side, the social partners committed themselves to implement the recommendations of the study.

In the Republic of **Moldova**, a pool of occupational safety and health experts was created with the ILO's support. The ILO offered training on the relevant ILO and EU standards and shared good practices with trade unions members to increase their skills and knowledge. Around 200–250 trade union members have become able to provide specialized assistance in court cases related to workplace accidents and safety problems (e. g. in the metal industry). They can also develop position papers and proposals to amend the existing legislation. At the company level, these experts participated in the establishment of bipartite committees on occupational health and safety, as required by the relevant EU directive, as well as in the application of a roadmap to assess workplace risks in the Republic of Moldova.

In The former Yugoslav Republic of **Macedonia**, the Federation of Trade Unions contributed significantly to the establishment of new economic and social councils in six municipalities. In the first half of 2014, five new bipartite collective agreements were signed at the branch level in the country. In **Albania**, after training offered by the ILO, trade unions were able to delegate nine new members to the new National Labour Council and support the functioning of the social dialogue at country level. The council discusses draft laws before those are submitted to the Parliament.

Comments formulated by the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) and the ILO Committee of Experts and the ratified ILO conventions were referred to in a number of court cases in the sub-region.

28 S. Paunović et al.: *Enterprise level collective agreements in the Republic of Serbia* (Belgrade, Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, United Branch Trade Unions "Nezavisnost", 2013).

Partnerships and looking ahead

ILO activities in Central and Eastern Europe have been carried out in close cooperation with the European Union, the United Nations Country Teams, UN agencies, various national or international development agencies and funds in addition to governments, employers' and workers' organizations.

Within UN Country Teams (UNCTs) the ILO is drawing on its knowledge, experience and proven expertise to provide technical support and policy advice in various fields, including employment, creation of enterprises and cooperatives, training for employability, and social protection. Through Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and technical cooperation projects, the ILO addresses the sectoral world of work demands of its tripartite constituents – while contributing to the outcomes under the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), 'One UN' Programmes and to UN-wide sustainable development goals.

The main donors supporting ILO activities in Central and South-Eastern Europe have included the European Commission, the Governments of Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, the Austrian Development Agency, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Spanish Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, the United States Department of Labor, UNDP, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and various other governments through the regular budget of the ILO.²⁹

The main goal of the ILO is to promote decent and productive jobs as well as job-rich growth in a region hit by different economic and financial difficulties as well as political conflicts. The ILO seeks to maintain a sustainable and balanced portfolio of technical cooperation projects and programmes in the future as well to support the most vulnerable countries and social groups to overcome these difficulties.



Creating Jobs for Equity and Prosperity – Regional Conference on Employment and Social Inclusion, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the ILO in Skopje, 16–17 April 2015 © UNDP

29 A list of main ILO technical cooperation projects in Central and Eastern Europe is available on www.ilo.org/budapest/what-we-do/projects/lang--en/index.htm

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