
Introductory remarks by Dagmar Walter, Country Director, ILO India

Day 2 - Mobility of EU-India Start-ups: Challenges and Opportunities

15th June 2019, Hotel Conrad, Pune

Honourable Secretary and Deputy Ambassador

Esteemed guests from Government of India, the European Union, and Member States

Our valued stakeholders from the Indian and European start-up ecosystem, subject-matter specialists, friends from the media, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the second day of our seminar, Mobility of EU-Indian Start-ups: Challenges and Opportunities.

With insightful thoughts and perspectives gathered from the IT and automotive industry on the benefits of talent mobility yesterday, we approach an equally exciting discussion today, on the theme of mobility of entrepreneurs and start-ups in India and the EU.

The innovative entrepreneurial spirit, driving the disruptions in the fourth industrial revolution, is fast-changing the employment landscape of today. Start-ups and entrepreneurs are defining and continuously reshaping the new world of work. Rapid globalization and digitalization is charging start-ups to leap into foreign markets not only for business expansion but more so for co-creation and collaborative ideation. The new-age concepts of location-independent entrepreneurs and platform economy has rendered the distance across nations insignificant. The resulting economic dividend of this thriving knowledge economy, at the national and global level, is also leading to nuanced policy-level discussions and international cooperation initiatives amongst governments and businesses to nurture these global start-ups and entrepreneurs.

Recognising the impact of this global workplace transformation, the ILO has been studying, in its recent research efforts, the implications of this virtual work of work, including online digital labour platform, for workers as well as employers. The human-centred agenda endorsed by the Global Commission on Future of Work report, *Work for a Brighter Future*, demands for increased investments in people's capabilities and institutions of work, especially during future of work transitions and adoption of emerging technologies.

The ILO aims to encourage decent employment opportunities, enhances social protection, promotes rights at work and strengthens dialogue on work related issues. Its unique tripartite

structure gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments to ensure that the views of all are closely reflected in labour standards and in sharing policies and programmes. The ILO promotes a people-centred and sustainable approach to enterprise development which aligns enterprise growth with creation of productive employment and decent work with sustainable development objectives. It builds its approach through 3 mutually reinforcing pillars - creating an enabling environment which encourages investment and entrepreneurship; helping entrepreneurs to start and build successful enterprises and linking productivity to better working conditions and good industrial relations and environmental practise. Within the India EU migration and mobility context, the ILO commenced an empirical exercise last year to understand the challenges and opportunities for EU based start-ups coming to India and Indian start-ups going to the EU.

The start-up ecosystem has been gaining policy focus with governments and businesses in both India and the EU. The Global Start-up Ecosystem Report 2019 revealed through its first ever global policy audit that efforts towards immigration and go-global support are amongst the top three most common policy action taken by governments. There are several examples from EU MS – such as Estonia, France, and Italy where the introduction of start-up visa is attracting talent in innovation from third country nationals, with India being one of the top countries to leverage the benefits of such initiatives. The Government of India through the Start-up India programme has partnerships with nine countries, including four EU Member States: Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Portugal to enable innovation and start-up exchange, market access, acceleration and ecosystem immersion.

Our discussions today are curated to further this nascent dialogue and understand the perspective of Indian and European start-up ecosystem on challenges, opportunities and learning from good practices in mobility of Indian EU start-ups. We attempt to explore, in discussion with the practitioners and experts, how fostering mobility of entrepreneurs becomes a differentiator for global start-up economies and their attractiveness.

It gives me immense pleasure to see new stakeholders from the national, bilateral, and global start-up ecosystem participate in this forum today.

On behalf of the ILO, thank you for being here. I hope you will find the discussion of interest and that it will stimulate further detailed work on this subject. We look forward to deepening our engagement with entrepreneurs –as they increasingly redefine the world of work, and hearing their views as we move forward with the discussions today.