

Decent Work Country Agenda between Romania and the International Labour Office 2008-2009

Introduction

The primary goal of the ILO is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. The Decent Work Country Agenda promotes decent work as a key component of development policies and as a national policy objective of the Governments and Social Partners. The present Country Agenda is influenced by international development agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals and strategic documents of the EU as well as being based on national development objectives. It also takes account of the priorities of the ILO constituents as expressed in consultations held with them. The Agenda outlines the policies, strategies and results required to realise progress towards decent work for all. This document reflects the strategic planning of ILO cooperation activities with Romania for 2008-2009. Reflecting the constituents' as well as the ILO experts' assessment of past cooperation, the Agenda aims at ensuring greater synergies and stronger coherence of ILO activities in Romania and thus will contribute to achieving sustainable impacts.

In the period 2006-07, the Decent Work Country Programme was successfully implemented by the constituents, with the assistance of the ILO. Its aim was to promote decent work as an essential element for the development of the social and labour sphere in Romania. It was structured around three complementary priorities, combining different aspects of Decent Work; namely increasing the employability of specific groups, improving social protection and strengthening industrial relations system.

Country Context and Priorities

After joining the European Union on 1 January 2007, Romania has been facing new challenges relating to the improvement of the legal and institutional framework of social dialogue, and to the strengthening of law enforcement in order to respond better to the new labour market realities.

The tripartite consultations conducted by the ILO National Coordinator in February 2008 confirmed that a new type of cooperation was needed to help the national constituents address the challenges in the field of social dialogue stemming from the EU membership. The ILO agreed to this new approach that would take the form of a more focused and flexible agenda to secure a results oriented cooperation.

Strengthening social dialogue with a view to improve labour market regulation has been identified by the Romanian constituents as a key focus for the national social development policy for the period 2006-2013. The ILO's assistance in 2008-09 will contribute to meet this challenge.

On the occasion of the ILO's technical assistance mission that took place in Bucharest on 15-16 May 2008 as well as based on the consultations held by the Romanian tripartite delegation with DIALOGUE and NORMES Departments during the 97th session of the ILC, the Ministry of Labour, Equal Opportunities and Family and the social partners' representatives at national level signed a Memorandum of Agreement on the following principles:

- 1) to improve the labour and social dialogue legal and institutional framework;
- 2) to request the ILO's technical assistance regarding the amendment of the following package of laws:
 - a) Law No. 130-1996 on collective labour contracts;
 - b) Law No. 168/1999 on the settlement of labour disputes;
 - c) Laws on trade unions and employers organizations.

Improving the legal and institutional framework for labour and social dialogue will be the shared goal and priority of the Decent Work Agenda for 2008-2009. This will be achieved through a tripartite consensus, while reflecting the stipulations of relevant ILO standards and European best social dialogue practices, including at the sectoral level. In the port and transport sectors, the social partners' capacity to effectively engage in social dialogue will be enhanced with the ILO's technical assistance.

Occupational safety and health continues to be a major concern for the national constituents. Following consultations held on the occasion of the mission of the ILO Director for Europe and Central Asia in Romania, on 8 July 2008, the representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities and of the social partners have requested the ILO technical assistance in view of:

- a) improving the legal framework of occupational safety and health and labour inspection;
- b) increasing efficiency of OSH committees;
- c) ratification of the ILO Convention no. 155 on workers' occupational safety and health, 1981.

In order to achieve these results, the national constituents will agree on the amendments to the relevant law package, in particular the Framework Law no. 319 on occupational safety and health and the Law no. 346/2000 on work injuries insurance, which will be submitted to the ILO for technical comments.

Taking into consideration the available resources, the ILO will also provide technical assistance for the ratification of the Convention no. 155 and support for a training seminar targeting the members of OSH committees in the construction and mining sectors.

The ILO will also contribute to increasing the value of employers and workers organizations with a view to providing new or better services to their existing and potential members.

In addition, the relevant governmental agencies and social partners will be assisted by the ILO to pilot social finance mechanisms aiming to facilitating self-employment of youth and long term unemployed. The ILO will assist the country's efforts to curb trafficking and worst forms of child labour.

The Decent Work Country Agenda will be implemented jointly by the constituents and the ILO. The ILO will provide the technical expertise and assistance to facilitate the achievements of expected results.

The new cooperation framework is the continuation of the previous successful cooperation between Romania and the International Labour Organization and builds upon past achievements and lessons learned.

The ILO and the Ministry of Labour, Equal Opportunities and Family and the social partners will review the implementation of this Decent Work Agenda periodically in order to assess progress made, while maintaining the necessary flexibility to adapt to evolving needs in the specific national context.