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Exchange of Letters between the International Labour Organisation and the Commission of the European Communities

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

21 December 1989

Dear Mr. President,

In 1958 and 1961 the International Labour Organisation and the European Communities successively concluded agreements fixing the terms of their co-operation.

In their exchange of letters of 5 October 1961 and 2 November 1961, the President of the Commission and the Director-General of the ILO agreed on a system of direct consultation by means of which the liaison and collaboration arrangements laid down in the said agreement could be implemented more effectively. The importance of effective collaboration was reaffirmed in an exchange of letters in 1978.

The development of the social policy and the completion of the Single Market in 1992, the achievement of economic and social co-operation and the development of the social dimension of the Single Market are impelling the Community to assume a greater role in the economic and social field at world level.

The International Labour Organisation for its part has seen its activities grow considerably in the field of standards with the adoption of some 50 international labour Conventions and an even greater number of Recommendations. It has concentrated on priority fields, in particular that of employment, and has acquired substantially greater means for providing direct assistance towards the economic and social development of its member States in the form of technical co-operation projects.

There is no question that in this context the arrangements for co-operation between the two organisations could be expanded, particularly as regards:

- the programme of co-operation on development given the importance which the Commission attaches to the social aspects of development and the promotion of human resources;
- employment policies;
- working conditions;
- health and safety;
- industrial relations;
- social security and social protection;
- the promotion of equal opportunities and equal treatment;
- the social aspects of sectoral policies, particularly in the sphere of maritime transport and ports;
- freedom of movement and migration policies;
- vocational training.

In view of this widening of fields of interest and action, the two parties have arrived at the conclusion that the system of co-operation should be reaffirmed and brought up to date in order to make optimum use of opportunities for collaboration whilst respecting the specific institutional characteristics of the two parties and in a spirit of reciprocity.

To this end, it has therefore been agreed that the former arrangements should be refined and extended as follows:

- the Community, represented by the Commission, shall attend the meetings of the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body, to which it will continue to be regularly invited;

- the Commission, for its part, shall ensure that, where appropriate, the representatives of the ILO are invited to attend meetings of bodies depending on the Commission which deal with social and labour issues which by their nature are of interest to the ILO;
- the President of the Commission and the Director-General of the ILO or their representatives shall consult each other at the appropriate stage on any development within their organisation which may have a bearing on co-operation between the two parties;
- exchanges of information or assistance in fields of common interest may be agreed in the appropriate form in each case (documents, visits, working parties, financing of projects) between the officials responsible for the programmes concerned;
- a high-level meeting shall be held once a year, alternately in Brussels and Geneva, in order to review co-operation during the year and to determine the direction of future activities.

It is my belief that these arrangements will ensure the continuation of collaboration between our two institutions on the same harmonious basis as in the past.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Michel Hansenne.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES TO THE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Dear Mr. Director-General,

I hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter of 21 December 1989, the terms of which are as follows:

(same text as the letter from the Director-General to the President of the Commission of the European Communities)

It is my belief that these arrangements will ensure the continuation of collaboration between our two institutions on the same harmonious basis as in the past.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Jacques Delors.