



**Conclusions
of the 14th High Level Meeting
between the International Labour Office and the European Commission**

Brussels, 11-12 October 2018

On 11 and 12 October 2018, the International Labour Office and the European Commission held in Brussels their 14th High Level Meeting since the renewal of their Exchange of Letters in 2001. The Meeting was an opportunity to build upon the Strategic Partnership in the field of development cooperation signed in 2004 by both institutions.

Led by the commitment to maintain their well-established and many-sided cooperation and adapt it to new challenges, the ILO and the European Commission engaged in in-depth discussions over policy developments affecting employment and social protection. Both have noted with satisfaction that their cooperation has led to tangible improvements in the world of work.

Participants shared visions and policy priorities; they discussed programmes and activities with a view to identify guiding elements for a sound ILO-EU cooperation over the year ahead. In 2019, the ILO will celebrate its 100th anniversary. To mark this important event, the ILO Director-General launched the Future of Work Centenary Initiative which is aimed at understanding and responding effectively to the transformative changes the World of Work is undergoing. The ILO and the European Commission agreed to join forces on the future of work during this celebration year.

Representatives of the ILO and of the European Commission highly appreciated the open and constructive discussions at both technical and senior management level, which convincingly demonstrated the commitment of both organisations to work closely together on issues of common concern and interest.

The following Operational Conclusions were agreed to as outcome of the High Level Meeting, shaping the policy context for ILO-EU cooperation until their next High Level Meeting. The attached participants' list and the jointly-agreed agenda of the two consecutive days of the HLM form integral parts of the annexes of the present conclusions.

General Conclusions

General Conclusions

For over a decade the ILO and the Commission have built a multifaceted and rich cooperation on employment and social affairs. Acknowledging the achievements of that partnership, the pressing human, economic and social challenges and the opportunities offered by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Reform and the ILO Centenary, they agree to enhance their cooperation at several levels.

The ILO and the Commission will:

1. Strengthen their coordination to promote social justice and fairness, decent work and international labour standards in the EU, in third countries and in the global agenda, including in the context of the G20 and in joint activities with multilateral organisations;
2. Work together to promote the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 8, through joint actions at both international and multilateral levels and development cooperation, focusing on all aspects of decent work;
3. Reinforce contributions to each other's initiatives and analytical work and intensify exchanges on jobs, growth and investment, youth employment, informal economy, social protection, gender equality, migration/refugees, working conditions, OSH, global supply chains, child labour, forced labour, social dialogue including capacity-building measures, as well as long-term trends in the world of work;
4. Regularly exchange views on progress regarding skills enhancement, women's empowerment, increases in productivity, productive employment and quality of work;
5. Continue to support the improvement of national capacities in the field of labour statistics, and in particular for measuring progress towards decent work and the implementation of the SDGs;
6. Facilitate contact between EU Delegations and ILO Offices at country level;
7. Keep each other regularly informed on the implementation of international labour standards in the EU and in partner countries, as well as on the promotion of human rights;
8. Consult each other on issues of common interest requiring immediate attention;
9. Start a process to renew their exchange of letters.

Strategic Orientations for ILO-EU Cooperation in the global agenda

<p>Future of Work and EU pillar of social rights</p>	<p>Addressing the changing nature of jobs, with the growing share of non-standard forms of employment and making the achievement of social justice and fairness an agenda for today and tomorrow is a shared aim of the ILO and the EU, in particular in the context of the ILO Future of Work Centenary Initiative and the European Pillar of Social Rights.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will share information on their research and analytical work on long-term changes in the world of work, reinforce each other's initiatives aimed at shaping the future of work and cooperate in implementing the upcoming Recommendations of the Global Commission on the Future of Work and outcome document of the Centenary International Labour Conference. In particular, they will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to cooperate and to exchange information on policies and initiatives of common interest; 2. Explore opportunities for cooperation on the Future of Work; such as jointly analysing developments, challenges and opportunities with regard to employment, including non-standard forms of employment, skills, working conditions and Occupational Safety and Health as well as transition mechanisms, social protection and social dialogue; 3. Jointly promote the implementation of research findings and orientations; 4. Explore opportunities for cooperation in the implementation of the plan of action to be adopted by the ILO Governing Body to follow up on the conclusions on social dialogue and tripartism of the 2018 International Labour Conference, in particular on cross-border social dialogue. <p>The Commission will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Organize a High-Level event in 2019 on the Future of Work after the release of the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work; 6. Actively prepare the EU contribution to the ILO centenary.
<p>Trade and labour, International labour Standards</p>	<p>Over the years, the ILO and the Commission have developed strong cooperation in the area of international labour standards. This cooperation has become very relevant in the sustainable development context of the EU trade agenda. The results of joint research on labour provisions in trade agreements and on the employment effects of trade policies further contribute to inform the policy debate on the matter. Cooperation between the Commission and the ILO is also ongoing through a set of projects supporting partner countries in effectively implementing international labour standards.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue their cooperation with respect to the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards and hold regular discussions on how to increase impact; 2. Strengthen their cooperation to promote the ratification of fundamental conventions in the context of trade and investment agreements; Explore areas of mutual interest on occupational safety and health, labour inspection and global supply chains;

Strategic Orientations for ILO-EU Cooperation in the global agenda

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Continue their cooperation on supporting compliance with international labour standards in the context of the GSP+ scheme through exchange of information, and through ILO providing expertise and technical assistance at the request of partner countries to support the implementation of core labour standards, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies; 4. Build on joint research on trade and labour, including international labour standards, including by carrying out dissemination activities and supporting capacity building of tripartite constituents and other stakeholders; 5. Cooperate in promoting the ratification and implementation of the 2014 ILO Forced Labour Protocol and Recommendation; 6. Continue and improve development cooperation to promote labour standards in low and middle income countries and in relevant trading partners; 7. Explore the possibility to establish new working methods, including the creation of a steering committee, and an overall framework to leverage cooperation; 8. Explore opportunities for further cooperation on labour-related aspects of women's rights and gender equality, as well as of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)/Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) and the promotion of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) – including in a trade context. <p>The Commission will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Monitor the ratification process of the Forced Labour Protocol in Member States; 10. Actively promote the ratification and implementation of the Forced Labour Protocol by partner countries.
<p>Partnership and cooperation for sustainable development</p>	<p>The engagement on development cooperation of the European Union with the ILO is substantive. The European Union represents ILO's largest funding partner. This cooperation covers a broad spectrum across the Decent Work Agenda such as migration, youth employment CSR, supply chains and OSH, child and forced labour, trade and labour standards, TVET, etc.). The cooperation involves global, regional and country programmes, with EU support across the five ILO Flagships. Increasingly, the cooperation involves multiple UN agencies, European development agencies and other partners in the form of multi-stakeholder partnerships such as in the context of the Alliance 8.7.</p> <p>The EU supports the UN development system reform process, in which the ILO is an active actor. The reform represents an opportunity to promote the Decent Work Agenda across the SDGs with new partners and allows greater efficiencies in delivering the actions. The EU and the ILO agree on the importance of ILO's normative mandate around international labour standards to be preserved and promoted in a reformed UN, alongside inclusive governance that involves social partners.</p>

Strategic Orientations for ILO-EU Cooperation in the global agenda

	<p>The ILO and the Commission agreed that they would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to work hand in hand in promoting decent work, including in UN development cooperation, in particular as regards its integration into the UNDAFs, in working with the IFIs and as part of the review of SDG 8 in 2019; 2. Disseminate information, including the conclusions of the high level meeting, to EU Delegations and ILO Offices and actively encourage country-level exchanges around decent work priorities; 3. Identify further ways to cooperate in the context of key EU initiatives, for instance on addressing violence at work under the “Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls” or maximizing the employment dimension of the EU External Investment Plan; 4. Explore possible support to optimise decent job creation in the framework of Africa-Europe sustainable Investment and Jobs Alliance.
<p>Promoting women's rights and gender equality in the world of work</p>	<p>Promoting equality of treatment and equal opportunities between women and men, including equal pay for work of equal value is high on both the ILO's and the EU's agenda and represents a key aspect under the European Pillar of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The ILO Centenary's focus on the future of work and the “women at work initiative”, the ILO standard setting on violence and harassment in the world of work tabled for the ILC 2019, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls as well as the EU initiatives on work-life balance, gender pay gap, women in corporate management and access to social protection provide for further opportunities to cooperate in this field over 2018/2019.</p> <p>The Commission and the ILO will explore a more strategic approach to their cooperation in this area and will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reinforce each other's initiatives aimed at promoting gender quality; 2. Explore possibilities to develop cooperation on care work, work-life balance in general and family-related leaves and flexible arrangements in particular, as well as on equal pay / EPIC (Equal Pay international Coalition); 3. Explore possibilities to foster and leverage their cooperation on women migrants and in the context of the Spotlight Initiative. <p>The Commission will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Actively prepare the EU contribution to the Centenary International Labour Conference to include gender quality in the outcome document on the future of work; 5. Actively prepare the EU contribution to the adoption of instruments on violence and harassment in the world of work living up to societal challenges and able to be widely ratified and implemented; 6. Facilitate contacts between EU Institutions, EU Delegations and ILO Offices to disseminate outcomes and explore further possible cooperation in the context of the Spotlight Initiative.

Issues addressed in technical meetings	
Decent work in global supply chains	<p>Promoting decent work in global supply chains is high on ILO and EU agenda and both organisations are involved in a number of initiatives in this field. Improving working conditions, including Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and promoting core labour standards in global supply chains is a major area for cooperation between the ILO and the Commission. The Vision Zero Fund and the ILO meeting of experts on cross-border social dialogue add to the opportunities to cooperate in this field over 2018/2019. The EU-ILO cooperation in this area contributes to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on several goals and targets particularly under SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production and SDG 17 on Partnerships.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will leverage their cooperation on decent work in global supply chains and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold a regular discussion between relevant Commission and ILO services on respective actions and cooperation on decent work in global supply chains to improve coordination and maximise the impact of the cooperation; 2. Identify areas of ILO-EU cooperation on decent work in global supply chains with high impact with the view to promote their results and explore possibilities to leverage, replicate or scale them up, with particular attention to the impact on rural areas as well as on women, youth and people and groups in vulnerable situations; Explore other areas of joint research; 3. Foster further the application of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) and promote the 2016 ILC Conclusions concerning decent work in global supply chains as a basis for actions of governments and businesses related to GSC; 4. Further cooperate on decent work in supply chains, including on safer workplaces, in the context of the G20, the G7, the Vision Zero Fund, and in other relevant fora; 5. Build on the results of their joint research on OSH in the context of global supply chains to engage in joint advocacy; Explore other areas of joint research; 6. Cooperate on promoting CSR and responsible business conduct in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe; 7. Explore possibilities to resume cooperation on cross-border social dialogue. <p>The Commission will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Actively prepare the EU contribution to the meeting of experts on cross-border social dialogue and its follow-up.
Migration, refugees and decent work in fragile contexts	<p>Migration, refugees and decent work in fragile situations are high on the international agenda. Both the ILO and the Commission promote a rights-based, gender sensitive approach and have taken initiatives and developed guidance in these areas. They have reacted to the situation related to migration and the refugee crisis and pursue an active engagement in the context of the preparation of global Compacts on refugees and on migration.</p>

Issues addressed in technical meetings	
	<p>The Commission and the ILO will continue their cooperation in these areas and will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue their exchange of information on their respective activities and on their involvement in global fora, in particular in the framework of the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees and the Valletta Summit on Migration; 2. Explore possibilities of joint actions on migration and integration of refugees and migrants, in particular in the context of UN activities, the ILO proposed Global Skills Partnership and in the area of data collection; 3. Carry out joint projects on the integration of refugees and migrants into the labour market, fair recruitment of labour migrants, on migrant domestic workers, on the elimination of child and forced labour and jointly promote their results; 4. Explore further cooperation on the promotion of fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in the context of migration/refugees and in fragile situations as well as on the promotion of decent work in humanitarian responses.
Mega events and labour standards	<p>Forced labour, unsafe conditions and other labour abuses suffered by workers, often migrants, in some host countries of mega sports and cultural events have drawn the public attention to the need for global actions to promote decent work in the preparation and conduct of such events, with particular attention to the construction and hospitality sectors. The EU and ILO have both taken initiatives to promote human rights and decent work in mega sports and cultural events</p> <p>The Commission and the ILO will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange information on their respective activities on human rights and decent work in mega events and explore opportunities for cooperation in this area; 2. Explore opportunities to cooperate on skills and labour market access through and in sports; 3. Identify countries with upcoming major sport and cultural events and explore if ILO could work together with EU Delegations in the countries concerned to build local alliances on the matter; 4. Carry on exchanging information and cooperating in the countries involved in major events, including Gulf countries; 5. Map out possible cooperation in multi-stakeholders' initiatives.
Joint research	<p>Cooperation between the ILO and the Commission has developed positively over the years through exchange of information as well as through joint research. Both sides recognised that their cooperation also leads to concrete results on the ground, for example, on how to use trade as a leverage to promote core labour standards and improve working conditions. For 2018/2019:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ILO and the Commission are committed to build on their joint research by carrying out dissemination activities and supporting capacity building of tripartite constituents and other stakeholders and to explore new opportunities based on mutual interest and priorities;

Issues addressed in technical meetings	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The ILO and the Commission expressed mutual interest to carry out joint research in the field of trade, employment and labour markets. They will develop a methodological framework to explore both the qualitative and quantitative impact of trade on the labour market; 3. In addition, both the Commission and the ILO carry out their own research on employment and social issues, such as on social protection, digital work, alternative labour market indicators and Occupational Safety and Health. They agreed to hold regular exchanges to share information on their own research and analytical work to reinforce mutual learning and evidence-based policy making and to explore possibilities for cooperation. <p>The Commission and the ILO will hold an exchange on research following the launch of the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work in preparation of the Centenary International Labour Conference.</p>
Maritime, fishing and ship recycling	<p>The ILO has a long standing experience in setting international labour standards in the maritime transport and fishing sectors, both highly internationalised and presenting particular risks regarding working and living conditions on board. These standards are implemented in the EU through agreements between social partners, EU law and enforcement measures and national legislation. Both the ILO and the EU have also taken initiatives in the field of ocean governance, with the EU promoting ratification of relevant international standards, and on ship recycling.</p> <p>In 2018/2019, the ILO and the Commission, in particular the services responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention and the Work in Fishing Convention and the EU Directives respectively, will engage in a more structured exchange of information and cooperation, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold regular meetings/videoconferences between the teams and explore the possibility to participate in each other's trainings; 2. Cooperate to promote the ratification of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention and explore cooperation opportunities for capacity building regarding the Convention; 3. Cooperate in the implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, the ILO Work in Fishing Convention and the corresponding EU directives in the EU, including exchanges of information regarding implementation and address challenges in application identified by the Commission and the ILO; 4. As regards the implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, give particular attention to the functioning of recruitment and placement services in labour supplying countries, compliance and enforcement issues, capacity building efforts and seeking synergies on training issues between in particular EMSA and ITC ILO; 5. Promote co-operation between the ILO and other international bodies dealing with maritime and fishing issues, in particular IMO and FAO, engage in joint advocacy to address unacceptable conditions of work at sea in international fora and explore possibilities of joint programmes in specific countries;

Issues addressed in technical meetings	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Disseminate outcomes of their joint project to combat unacceptable forms of work in the fishing and seafood sectors and explore opportunities to follow-up and to develop guidance that could be used worldwide; 7. Exchange information and data on labour and environmental challenges and opportunities in ship recycling and related-industries; 8. Exchange information and explore possibilities for cooperation on the EU and ILO initiatives on ship recycling; 9. Consider ways of responding to requests from ship recycling facilities, industry stakeholders and/or ship recycling countries to improve their performance in terms of decent work and environmental protection.
Specific countries	<p>The ILO and the Commission can build on their long-standing cooperation with specific countries and the outcomes achieved, which are guided by the findings of the ILO supervisory bodies and by policy dialogues and implemented in consultation with the government and the social partners in the countries concerned.</p> <p>In Asia, the ILO and the Commission will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue their cooperation to promote decent work in an integrated manner, in particular the fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as responsible business conduct and sustainable investment and to use their convening power to develop innovative partnerships with relevant stakeholders; including peer-to-peer learning and good-practice approaches in these efforts; 2. Work together to leverage the private sector contribution to decent work by promoting Responsible Business Conduct/Corporate Social Responsibility in line with internationally agreed standards; China, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam are part of the Responsible Supply Chains in Asia project; 3. Bangladesh: explore ways to invigorate the full implementation of the Sustainability Compact for Bangladesh and to enhance national ownership and buy-in; insist on the need for compliance with the findings of ILO supervisory bodies; organise regular exchanges on developments and cooperation. Explore possibilities to contribute to new initiatives, including the on-going cooperation on vocational education and training and employment injury insurance; 4. China: continue to promote cooperation with China in the promotion of international labour standards, including ratification of the fundamental ILO conventions; Seek synergies on responsible business conduct; 5. Korea: continue to cooperate on supporting Korea in the ratification of the four fundamental ILO conventions not yet ratified by the country, including as regards promoting consensus on labour law reforms through the functioning of social dialogue in the country; 6. Myanmar: continue to cooperate, together with other international partners, on the promotion of international labour standards and social dialogue, including under the Myanmar Labour Initiative, and other areas of cooperation such as peace, reconciliation and development; promote labour rights of ethnic minorities, including prevention of forced labour of the Rohingya people and build institutional capacity for effective complaints, grievance and dispute settlement mechanisms;

Issues addressed in technical meetings

7. Pakistan: Cooperate on the implementation and application of international labour standards and working conditions as well as on reporting; Jointly implement the new development cooperation project on child labour and forced labour in cotton value chains;
8. Philippines: continue their cooperation in the promotion of international labour standards;
9. Thailand: cooperate on the promotion of international labour standards, in the fight against unacceptable forms of work in the fishing and seafood sector and other areas related to decent work, in support to EU-Thailand Labour Dialogue;
10. Vietnam: continue to use leverage to aim at ratification, implementation and application of international labour standards, including on freedom of association and collective bargaining and on eliminating discrimination and forced labour.

In Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Turkey and Central Asia, the ILO and the Commission will:

11. Western Balkans countries: Intensify exchange on the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes and the assessment of legislative developments pertaining to labour standards and social dialogue; Continue cooperation in the context of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform for the Western Balkans, including intensified dissemination of its results;
12. Turkey: Intensify dialogue and cooperation regarding the monitoring of fundamental labour rights and their promotion. Call upon swift action of the Appeal Commission regarding the 130.000 dismissed public service workers. Jointly advocate for better livelihood support and labour market issues regarding refugees; Support implementation of OSH standards, especially in mining and construction; Closely monitor developments regarding social dialogue and continue their cooperation to promote social dialogue, and combat undeclared work notably by increasing capacities of labour inspection;
13. Eastern Neighbourhood countries: Regularly exchange on employment and social matters; foster focused policy dialogue and cooperate on the promotion of labour standards and social dialogue, including through capacity building, and the possible policy dialogue on employment and social issues with the three Eastern Association Agreement countries and explore possibilities of joint projects regarding labour inspection;
14. Armenia: Continue their cooperation in the promotion of international labour standards, social dialogue and social protection, including through capacity building of the labour administration and inspection, employment services and social protection;
15. Georgia: Continue their cooperation in the promotion and capacity building relating to labour inspection and social dialogue;
16. Ukraine: Explore opportunities for cooperation in the context of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, notably further support to labour inspection, as well as regards gender equality and illegal recruitment and placement services of seafarers;
17. Uzbekistan: Build upon the decisive progress achieved in eliminating child labour, step up their cooperation towards eliminating forced labour as well as explore possibilities to cooperate on active labour market policies, social dialogue, skills, social protection, and labour inspection.

Issues addressed in technical meetings	
European External Investment Plan	<p>The Commission and the ILO will continue to strengthen their collaboration on the sustainable employment dimension of the EU External Investment Plan (EIP):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow up on the STRENGTHEN project (Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies) with focus on the employment dimension; 2. Cooperate on employment impact assessments.
Preparation of forthcoming key events	<p>The ILO and the Commission will maintain close cooperation regarding relevant international events taking place in 2018/2019, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The G20, and in particular in the preparation of Employment and Labour Ministers Meetings and Task Force on Employment; - The High Level Meetings of the Bangladesh Compact and the Myanmar Labour rights initiative; - Preparations for the Centenary International Labour Conference.