



Conference on the implementation of EU social dialogue instruments

12-13 December, Brussels

Conclusions

This conference has confirmed the importance that European and national social partners attach to an effective European social dialogue. Social dialogue and well-developed industrial relations at all appropriate levels are a crucial element of the European social model and democratic government.

European and national social partners are committed to continue their endeavours to ensure appropriate implementation and follow-up of EU social dialogue instruments in more EU countries towards the objective of full EU coverage.

Coordination between EU and national social dialogues is increasingly important inter alia in the context of EU social dialogue autonomous work programmes and as part of the European semester process.

The European social partners draw the following conclusions from the discussions:

1. The European Commission and national governments must respect the autonomy of European and national social partners. Implementation and follow-up of EU autonomous social dialogue instruments is the responsibility of social partners, who are fully committed to support their respective members in view for them to take the appropriate measures for this implementation and/or follow-up to occur. This is the case both for autonomous agreements which have been concluded in the context of a Commission's consultation and those which have been concluded on the basis of autonomous work programmes of the social partners. The Commission remains responsible for its own actions, taking into account the implementation results reached autonomously by the social partners;
2. The work done over the last few years by the social partners in European countries where there have been difficulties amongst others in the implementation and/or follow-up of EU autonomous agreements is assessed as useful and needs to be extended in order to achieve sustainable improvements in capacity building and social dialogue practice on the ground;
3. The European social partners will start discussing about a new cycle of seminars as part of the next Integrated Programme of the EU social dialogue, taking into account the lessons learned in 2012 and 2013 and, where appropriate, the action plans agreed previously by national social partners;

4. To overcome the difficulties and capacity constraints facing social partners in some countries, the European social partners are willing to explore with the Commission ways to make use of some EU funding available under the EU Social Dialogue budget line for national social partners who need it and ask for it jointly;

5. The first autonomous agreement deriving from EU social partners' autonomous work programme is the Inclusive Labour Markets framework agreement signed in 2010. The European social partners will prepare their final implementation report in 2014. The Commission does not need to prepare its own assessment of the implementation of this framework agreement as it would interfere in the autonomy of the social partners. In the case of absence of reporting by some members after those four years, European social partners will encourage those in the countries concerned to keep them informed about their follow-up activities until actions have been undertaken at national level;

6. The European social partners will discuss with the European Commission how to upgrade the role and adapt the functioning of the Social Dialogue Committee in order to ensure high level and more complete participation and regular discussions between European and national social partners and the Commission on employment and labour market developments across Europe, taking into account the European semester process;

7. The EU Social partners will give further consideration to any other complementary action that could strengthen the European social dialogue and improve the implementation and follow-up of its instruments.
