

# **13th High Level Meeting between the International Labour Office and the European Commission**

## **Joint Conclusions**

**Geneva, 18-19 January 2017**

On 18 and 19 January, the International Labour Office and the European Commission held in Geneva their 13<sup>th</sup> 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.

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 concerns and interest.

The following Operational Conclusions were agreed as outcome of the High Level Meeting, shaping the policy context for ILO-EC 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

<b>A sound partnership</b>	<p>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, they agree to enhance their cooperation at several levels.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>2. Work together to promote the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through joint actions at both international and multilateral levels and development cooperation, focusing on decent work and social protection;</li> <li>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, taking also into account the specific characteristics of the territories notably the situation of rural areas;</li> <li>4. Regularly exchange views on progress regarding skills enhancement, women's empowerment, increases in productivity, productive employment and quality of work;</li> <li>5. Continue to support the improvement of national capacities in the field of labour statistics, and in particular for measuring progress towards decent work.</li> <li>6. Facilitate contact between EU Delegations and ILO Offices at country level;</li> <li>7. Keep each other regularly informed on the implementation of international labour standards in the EU and in partner countries</li> <li>8. Consult each other on issues of common interest requiring immediate attention.</li> </ol>
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## Strategic Orientations for ILO-EU Cooperation in the global agenda

<b>Future of Work and EU Pillar of social rights</b>	<p>Restoring sustainable and inclusive growth and creating more and better jobs are today's outstanding political objectives of both the EU and the ILO. 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 also a shared aim, in particular in the context of the EU initiative towards a European Pillar of Social Rights and the ILO Future of Work Centenary Initiative.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Reinforce each other's initiatives aimed at supporting job-rich and sustainable growth and upward social convergence as well as improving job quality, labour market dynamics and inclusiveness;</li> <li>10. Exchange information on policies and explore opportunities for cooperation related to non-standard forms of employment and the future of work;</li> </ol>
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	<p>11. Share information on their research and analytical work on long-term changes in the world of work including as regards the sharing economy and digitalisation;</p> <p>12. Continue exchanges on the European Pillar of Social Rights and its implementation;</p> <p>13. Share information on their social dialogue activities and meetings; explore possibilities of cross participation in these meetings and of organising joint events; implement their joint projects in line with the strategic partnership on social dialogue for the period 2014-2017.</p> <p>The Commission will:</p> <p>14. Contribute to analytical activities and dialogues associated with the Future of Work Centenary Initiative and actively prepare for the EU contribution to the ILO centenary.</p> <p>The ILO will:</p> <p>15. Keep the Commission informed with regard to the next steps of its Centenary Initiative on the Future of Work</p>
<p><b>Social protection</b></p>	<p>Access to social protection is high on both ILO and EU's agendas and represents a key aspect under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.</p> <p>The Commission and the ILO will explore a more strategic approach to their cooperation in this area and will:</p> <p>16. Share experience and gather evidence on a rights-based approach to social protection, in particular regarding access, adequacy and quality of benefits, development of social protection systems, including the implementation of social protection floors;</p> <p>17. Reinforce each other's initiatives aimed at improving universal access to social protection and explore opportunities for cooperation in the implementation of the ILO flagship initiative on social protection floors;</p> <p>18. Make joint efforts to strengthen social protection through global initiatives, such as the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection and the Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B), including its related technical initiatives,</p> <p>19. Explore opportunities for further collaboration on social protection.</p>
<p><b>Trade and labour, International Labour Standards</b></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 carried out in 2016, and on the employment effects of trade policies through a project implemented since 2014, further make key contributions 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> <p>20. Continue their cooperation, and where possible enhance it, with respect to the implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work in the context of trade-related matters, including under the trade and sustainable development chapters of trade agreements;</p> <p>21. Exchange appropriate information, including where possible on-site information, on the implementation of core labour standards by partner countries in a trade context. This may include ILO providing expertise and technical assistance at the</p>

	<p>request of partner countries to support the implementation of core labour standards, taking into account the conclusions of the ILO supervisory bodies;</p> <p>22. Build on joint research on trade and labour, including regarding International Labour Standards, by carrying out dissemination activities and supporting capacity building of tripartite constituents and other stakeholders;</p> <p>23. Cooperate in promoting the ratification and implementation of the 2014 ILO Forced Labour Protocol and Recommendation;</p> <p>24. Continue ongoing technical cooperation, including through development cooperation funds, to promote labour standards in low and middle income countries.</p> <p>The Commission will:</p> <p>25. Monitor the ratification process of the Forced Labour Protocol in Member States;</p> <p>26. Actively promote the ratification and implementation of the Forced Labour Protocol by partner countries.</p>
<p><b>Decent work in global supply chains</b></p>	<p>Promoting decent work in global supply chains is high on both the ILO and EU agendas and both organisations are involved in a number of initiatives in this field. Improving working conditions, including Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), in global supply chains is a major area of cooperation between the ILO and the Commission</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <p>27. Further cooperate on safer workplaces and responsible supply chains in the context of the G20, the G7 and the Vision Zero Fund, as well as in other relevant fora;</p> <p>28. Disseminate the results of their joint research on OSH in the context of global supply chains, ensure visibility of the results and, building on this work, engage in joint advocacy;</p> <p>29. Cooperate on promoting corporate social responsibility and responsible business conduct in Asia and on fighting unacceptable forms of work;</p> <p>30. Explore possibilities to further develop cooperation on decent work in global supply chains in specific sectors (e.g. garment and Better Work programme) and/or specific regions;</p> <p>31. Explore possibilities to resume cooperation on cross-border social dialogue to support the implementation of the ILO action plan on decent work in global supply chains on his matter.</p> <p>The ILO will:</p> <p>32. Inform the Commission on the Better Work programme including on the upcoming project to be carried out in Jordan.</p>

**Issues addressed in technical meetings**

<p><b>Migration and refugees</b></p>	<p>Migration and the refugee crisis are high on the EU and ILO agendas. Both the ILO and the Commission promote a rights-based, gender sensitive approach and have taken initiatives and developed guidance in these areas, including strategies to address migrants' smuggling, trafficking in human beings and forced labour. They have reacted to the recent situation related to migration and the refugee crisis and intend to pursue an active engagement in the context of the preparation of global Compacts on refugees and on migration, launched by the New York Declaration in September 2016.</p> <p>The Commission and the ILO will continue their cooperation in these areas and will:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>33. Continue their exchange of information on their respective plans and activities and actively disseminate good practice and policy guidance;</li> <li>34. Explore possibilities of joint actions in response to migration and integration of refugees and migrants while mitigating adverse impacts on labour markets resulting from potential abuses of vulnerable groups and promoting positive impacts on economies and societies;</li> <li>35. Carry out joint projects on the integration into the labour market through adequate skills assessment and development and the promotion of vocational education and training, on the fair recruitment of labour migrants, on migrant domestic workers, on the elimination of child and forced labour and jointly promote their results;</li> <li>36. Explore the possibility of a new global initiative on labour market integration and mobility of refugees grounded on the ILO guiding principles;</li> <li>37. Explore further cooperation on the promotion of fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in the context of migration/refugees and on SDG target 8.7 (elimination of child labour and forced labour) and 8.8 (labour migration)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maritime and fishing</b></p>	<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 as regards working and living conditions on board. These standards are implemented in the EU through agreements between social partners, EU law and enforcement measures as well as 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.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38. Cooperate to promote the ratification and implementation of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No 188) in the EU and third countries;</li> <li>39. Cooperate in the implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended;</li> <li>40. Engage in joint advocacy to address unacceptable conditions of work at sea;</li> <li>41. Disseminate outcomes of their joint project to combat unacceptable forms of work in the fishing and seafood sectors and explore opportunities to develop guidance that could be used worldwide;</li> <li>42. Share experiences in identifying and addressing gaps in legal protection of fishers, and in compliance and enforcement;</li> <li>43. Share information on analytical work regarding labour supplying States' responsibilities pursuant to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, and Directive 2013/54/EU and explore the possibility to cooperate with a view to enhance living and working conditions in maritime transport in light of this work.</li> <li>44. Exchange information on the social dimension of maritime transport and fishing, including the implementation of relevant labour standards;</li> <li>45. Exchange views on developing cooperation with the ILO - International Training Centre as regards training for recruitment and placement services based on the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006;</li> <li>46. Explore possible cooperation to increase the attractiveness of blue jobs for young people.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Informal Economy and Undeclared work</b></p>	<p>Enhancing cooperation in view of facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy and reducing undeclared work will remain high priorities for both the ILO and the EU in the years to come. This convergence of priorities calls for strengthening the cooperation of the two organisations.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <p>47. Discuss options for the ILO contribution to the activities of the "EU platform to enhance cooperation in tackling undeclared work", in which the ILO holds a permanent observer role;</p> <p>48. Address informal economy and undeclared work in the context of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform for the Western Balkans and jointly review the outcomes of projects undertaken in partnership that are targeting workers and enterprises in the informal economy;</p> <p>49. Cooperate to promote the ILO Recommendation on the transition from informal to formal economy (N°204), including through development cooperation, in the context of EU cooperation with Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries and in the Union for the Mediterranean, in cooperation with EU Delegations as appropriate, building on previous ILO and EU development cooperation experiences in this field.</p>
<p><b>Youth employment, work based learning and skills</b></p>	<p>Despite recent improvements, youth unemployment, underemployment and inactivity are among the key challenges facing the world today. Sustained cooperation between the ILO and the EU, based on major initiatives taken by both organisations, can help to efficiently address them. The EU and the ILO have also joined forces on new initiatives in the areas of work-based learning and skills.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <p>50. Continue to cooperate on youth employment in particular with regard to actions in multilateral fora (UN, G20), stressing the important role of the social partners in this context;</p> <p>51. Share knowledge and promote capacity building on what works for youth employment, including through the ILO platform "<i>What works in youth employment?</i>"</p> <p>52. Disseminate the results of technical cooperation on enhancing capabilities of policy-practitioners in the area of youth guarantee schemes, notably on quality offers, including by envisaging an event for Member States' representatives to share strategies, approaches and lessons learned;</p> <p>53. Strengthen cooperation on the attractiveness of vocational education and training as well as apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning, in particular in relation to quality principles for apprenticeships, the ILO toolkit and EC apprenticeship support services, closely linked to the work of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and GAN (Global Apprenticeship Network);</p> <p>54. Exchange information and share knowledge and best practices on skills policies, including for migrants, validation and recognition systems, skills intelligence/anticipation, open standards on skills and international skills competitions (e.g. WorldSkills);</p> <p>55. Jointly advocate and explore initiatives for the promotion of youth employment and work-based learning in developing, EU enlargement and neighbourhood countries, disseminate results of on-going cooperation and consider opportunities for mobility of VET learners at global level.</p> <p>56. Assess cooperation opportunities in the area of skills for the workforce, including basic skills linked to the Up-skilling Pathways Recommendation adopted by the EU.</p>

	<p>57. Continue on-going cooperation and explore possible further cooperation building on the results of the Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) programme.</p> <p>The ILO will:</p> <p>58. Invite the Commission to join the Multi-stakeholders Alliance of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth</p>
<p><b>Specific countries</b></p>	<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 implemented in consultation with the government and the social partners in the countries concerned.</p> <p>The ILO and the Commission will:</p> <p>59. Bangladesh: continue to work towards the full implementation of the Sustainability Compact for Bangladesh and a better compliance with the findings of ILO supervisory bodies, including through regular exchanges on developments and cooperation. Explore possibilities to contribute to new initiatives, including as regards the on-going cooperation on vocational education and training and employment injury insurance;</p> <p>60. Mongolia: continue their cooperation in the promotion of international labour standards;</p> <p>61. 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;</p> <p>62. Pakistan: Continue the cooperation on the promotion of international labour standards and working conditions in the textile and garment sectors;</p> <p>63. Philippines: continue their cooperation in the promotion of international labour standards;</p> <p>64. Thailand: cooperate on the promotion of international labour standards, in the fight against unacceptable forms of work in the fishing and seafood sectors and other areas related to decent work;</p> <p>65. Vietnam: continue their cooperation on the implementation and application of international labour standards, including on eliminating discrimination and forced labour;</p> <p>66. Central America countries: continue their cooperation in the promotion of international labour standards</p> <p>67. Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood countries: Regularly exchange on employment and social matters in Eastern Partnership countries; Foster focused policy dialogue and cooperate on the promotion of labour standards and social dialogue, including through capacity building, the implementation of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform for the Western Balkans, 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;</p> <p>68. Armenia: continue their cooperation in the promotion of international labour standards;</p> <p>69. Kazakhstan: in the context of the EU-Kazakhstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, jointly advocate for international labour standards and social dialogue;</p> <p>70. Turkey: Intensify dialogue and cooperation regarding the monitoring of fundamental labour rights and their promotion. Jointly advocate for better</p>

	<p>livelihood support and labour market issues regarding refugees. Support implementation of OSH standards, especially in mining and construction;</p> <p>71. Uzbekistan: build upon the already significant progress achieved in eliminating child labour, step up their cooperation towards eliminating forced labour and assess their cooperation to address these issues and promote decent work and explore possibilities to cooperate on other aspects of the Decent Work Country Programme;</p> <p>72. Southern Neighbourhood countries: cooperate on the promotion of labour standards, social dialogue and employment policy including the transition towards formal employment;</p>
<p><b>Preparation of forthcoming key events</b></p>	<p>73. The ILO and the Commission will maintain close cooperation regarding relevant international events taking place in 2017/2018, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The G20, and in particular in the preparation of Employment and Labour Ministers Meetings and the Task Force on Employment;</li> <li>- The High Level Meetings of the Bangladesh Compact and the Myanmar Labour rights initiatives;</li> <li>- Preparations for the ILC 2017 agenda items on labour migration, fundamental principles and rights at work, Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience and labour standards – June 2016;</li> <li>- The ILO European Regional Meeting in October 2017;</li> <li>- The “Our ocean” Conference in October 2017</li> <li>- The 5th child labour Conference in Argentina in November 2017.</li> </ul>