



Governing Body

319th Session, Geneva, 16–31 October 2013

GB.319/INS/6/1

Institutional Section

INS

Date: 24 September 2013

Original: English

SIXTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report and Declaration of the Ninth European Regional Meeting (Oslo, 8–11 April 2013)

Implementing the Oslo Declaration

1. At the Ninth European Regional Meeting, Government, Workers' and Employers' delegates from the 51 ILO member States of the Europe and Central Asia region adopted, on 11 April 2013, "The Oslo Declaration: Restoring confidence in jobs and growth". The Office understands the strong message of this Declaration as a call for an "exceptional response" from the ILO to the social and economic crisis that continues to severely impact many countries in the region.
2. The Office has also noted that the Oslo Declaration calls on the ILO to reinforce and reinvent its services in the region. Specific interventions will be required to respond to concrete demands in countries affected by the crisis. While this implies the continuation of current activities, in particular in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, it also requires the Office to extend its scope of engagement to other countries, including the Eurozone countries affected by the crisis. In so doing, the Office will promote balanced policy approaches in the spirit of the Oslo Declaration, which states that "Fiscal consolidation, structural reform and competitiveness, on the one hand, and stimulus packages, investment in the real economy, quality jobs, increased credit for enterprises, on the other, should not be competing paradigms". Business as usual behaviour is therefore not an acceptable option for the future. The Office must deliver its support in the region through a new, dynamic, facilitating and needs-based approach.
3. In response to the Oslo Declaration's call for action, the Office suggests pursuing the following measures:
 - Providing assistance to constituents on the specific challenges identified in the different countries of the region, including those immediately affected by the Eurozone crisis. In those countries covered by Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), the ILO's support can be continued in a targeted manner. In addition, specific and comprehensive proposals for support have been developed upon demand from constituents in Cyprus and Greece. Discussions for possible ILO action are under way with constituents in Portugal and Spain.

- Providing evidence-based, high quality research, analysis and technical advice is identified in the Oslo Declaration as an essential tool for Office action in the region. The Office will be launching a study series that will focus on specific challenges in selected countries (Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain) and provide practical approaches to overcoming the negative economic, social and political effects of the crisis. The publication of these studies will create an opportunity for tripartite exchange at the national level on issues of recovery and reform.
 - Providing assistance in the implementation of fundamental labour standards and other relevant international labour standards was identified as another essential means of action by the Oslo Declaration. The Office will extend its support to countries affected by the crisis on issues pertaining to the promotion of international labour standards, with particular attention to countries expressing immediate needs for capacity building at the national level. It will facilitate meetings and similar events on relevant topics, such as the one hosted by the Irish EU Presidency during the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference on the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).
 - Furthermore, the Oslo Declaration proposed facilitating the exchange of experience, including through platforms for sharing good practices and through the organization of seminars for mutual learning focused on concrete issues of concern. The Office will facilitate the set-up of such platforms, including at the subregional and regional levels, for example, on apprenticeships or youth employment.
 - The Oslo Declaration requests the Office to build the capacity of governments and social partners to take up their responsibilities to reinforce their contribution to recovery and reform, through enhanced social dialogue, collective bargaining and effective social partnership. The Office will continue to promote tripartite social dialogue as a cross-cutting issue in all ILO activities. Moreover, other specific activities may take forms similar to the seminar series on social dialogue currently being jointly organized by the ILO, the European Commission and the International Training Centre in countries affected by the crisis.
 - Lastly, the Oslo Declaration requests the ILO to intensify its strive for policy coherence with international and regional organizations and other relevant forums. The Europe and Central Asia region has a key role to play in this regard. The Office is committed to giving appropriate follow-up to the recent G20 Summit held under the Russian Presidency and to cooperating further with Turkey, which will host the G20 in 2015.
4. The Europe and Central Asia region is a key actor within the ILO and the Office is fully aware of all the challenges that the region is currently facing. To meet the expectations expressed at the Ninth European Regional Meeting, there will be new and intensified demands on the ILO Offices in the region, including the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. The Regional Office and other offices are proactively contributing to the ongoing reform process including the field review to determine ways of enhancing delivery. Internal as well as external partnerships will, inter alia, be essential for satisfying the additional demands in the region. The implementation of the Oslo Declaration will integrate future strategic directions including areas of critical importance. Close interaction with constituents at the national level is critical in addressing immediate and longer term demands. The DWCPs, as well as other cooperation agreements such as the recently agreed workplan between the ILO and the Government of Cyprus, will provide strategic guidance for such country level implementation. Moreover, the set-up of regional and subregional platforms will be a means of sharing good practices and creating opportunities for harnessing synergies and facilitating policy coherence with different international institutions and organizations. At the same time, an integrated, coordinated and coherent

Office-wide approach will be required between different technical departments at headquarters and the offices in the region to allow for a relevant and demand-oriented delivery of technical services to member States.