

Speech by the Norwegian Ambassador Karsten Klepsvik

Bilateral and experience sharing workshop in Warsaw, 2 - 3 March 2016

Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue – creating a better working environment together

Warsaw, 2 March 2016

Introduction

- Representatives of social partner organisations, representatives of ILO, ladies and gentlemen
- It is a great pleasure for me to open this Bilateral and Experience Sharing Workshop related to the Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue under the Norway Grants.
- I would like to thank the programme operator – Innovation Norway – for hosting this event, and for ensuring the smooth running of the programme.

Norway and the EU

- The future of Norway is closely entwined with the future of Europe as a whole. Through the Agreement on the European Economic Area, the EEA Agreement, Norway is an integrated part of the internal market. The internal market has served us well for the last decades, and it is now playing a key role in lifting Europe out of the financial crisis, creating growth, and creating jobs.
- Norway and the EU support the principle of social dialogue and social dialogue is a key element of the Nordic social model. The turmoil caused by the financial crisis, has placed enormous pressure on public funds. Unemployment remains high and recovery slow. These factors underline the importance of decent work and social dialogue in creating an equitable and fair future as Europe moves towards recovery.
- The Fund for Decent work and Tripartite Dialogue is an important program of the EEA Grants, and the programme area also builds on the ILO's (International Labour Organisation) Decent work Agenda.

Work related crime

- I would like to draw your attention towards one important topic of the social dialogue – this is work related crime.

- The Norwegian Government has developed a strategy to combat work-related crime, in close dialogue with the Norwegian social partners. Several Ministries are involved in the implementation.
- Combating crime and irresponsible working conditions are dependent on broad and sustained cooperation across borders.
- The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority has already signed bilateral agreements with the Labour Inspectorates in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland concerning cooperation and mutual exchange of information. There is also contact to Bulgaria and Romania, in order to achieve bilateral agreements on cooperation between labor inspection authorities.
- In addition to this, I would like to emphasize the Enforcement Directive as well as the new European Platform, that the European Commission has proposed, to reduce undeclared work. These tools provide a framework for extended cooperation on preventing labour market crime.
- In parallel with the EU efforts, the Norwegian Government sees a need to reinforce cooperation between countries.
- I believe that the EEA and Norway Grants may be applied to advance and further develop our bilateral cooperation, for instance between labour inspection authorities in our countries.

The Fund

- Social dialogue is a prerequisite to make our Social Market Economy work.
- The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker stated in a speech to the European Parliament that “ - The social market economy can only work if there is social dialogue. Social dialogue suffered during the crisis years. Now it must be resumed at national and especially at European level. I would like to be a President of social dialogue.”.
- These are views that my government shares. And we see that The Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue has an important role to play in this context.
- The Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue stands out from the other Norway Grants programmes in that it is a *global* fund and it has been implemented in almost all the Norway Grants beneficiary countries. The objective has been to strengthen

social dialogue and enhance the ability of beneficiary countries to address decent work objectives, such as non-discrimination, life-long learning and a living wage.

- Bilateral cooperation under the Fund, with the close involvement of the Norwegian social partners, is important for sharing expertise and experience.
- Strengthening ties between organisations and institutions brings benefits for the beneficiary countries and Norway alike. Of a total of 52 projects, I have learned that 28 have been implemented with the involvement of a Norwegian partner. The Norwegian partners report that these projects have given them new insights into how the social partners in Europe cooperate. Good practices will be adapted to a Norwegian setting. This has been a true sharing of experience.
- I would like to congratulate you all as Project Promoters and Innovation Norway as Programme Operator for the good job you have done.

- When it comes to the next period of the EEA and Norway Grants (2014-2021), we are pleased to have reached an agreement, which now hopefully will be signed before summer. Then we may start the process related to the implementation of the Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue for the next period.
- Further, based on the Review concluding that Innovation Norway has done a good job and also recommendation by the Norwegian Social Partners, it has been decided that Innovation Norway will continue as Program Operator for this program under the next Norway Grants Fund 2014 – 2021.
- Congratulations!

Closing remarks

- The new period will offer opportunities for a range of new projects.
- This Workshop thus comes very timely and I am confident that it will be a useful and fruitful opportunity to share experience and discuss ideas. I would like to thank you all for the important work you are doing, and wish you every success for the seminar and the new program.