

Decent work and tripartite dialogue

Social dialogue – the dialogue between workers and employers – is a key element of the European social model. Through the Norway Grants, the Norwegian government is helping to stimulate social dialogue and cooperation between labour market partners in Europe.

WHY FOCUS ON DECENT WORK AND TRIPARTITE DIALOGUE?

The present uneven economic development in Europe features a sharp increase in unemployment combined with skill shortages in some sectors. The European labour market is also faced with many challenges, including those of discrimination and gender equality issues.

Decent work concerns equal access to employment without discrimination, receiving a living wage, security in the workplace, social protection when, for example, ill or pregnant and freedom to organise for collective interest representation through trade unions.

A recent EU report reveals that industrial relations institutions in many of the beneficiary countries of Central and Eastern Europe remain generally weak and fragmented.¹ Findings show:

- > Tripartite dialogue (involving employers, trade unions and public authorities) is relatively new in many of the beneficiary countries and both unions and employers' organisations often have limited resources
- > In the 15 countries that were EU member states before 2004, some 70% of workers are covered by negotiated agreements at their workplace. But in Central and Eastern Europe this figure is only 44%
- > Trade union membership is lower in the Central and Eastern European countries

WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE?

Norway has set aside around €8 million under the current funding period to support decent work and tripartite dialogue in Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.



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The programmes promote the decent work agenda and help to craft partnerships for tripartite dialogue. They contribute to improving cooperation between the social partners – employers' organisations and trade unions – and public authorities, and will also help to strengthen bilateral ties with Norwegian partners.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE IT?

Support from the Norway Grants is focused on:

- > Improving labour laws and social dialogue structures and practices
- > Exchanging good practice between Norway and the beneficiary countries
- > Identifying employment opportunities for groups that are under-represented in the workforce
- > Advancing gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace
- > Improving worker adaptability and lifelong learning opportunities

Types of activities supported by the programmes include:

- > Production of training materials such as films, journals and online courses. A new training scheme in Hungary is preparing social partners to take part in collective bargaining, following changes introduced by the country's new Labour Code
- > The largest Norwegian trade union, Norwegian Union of Municipal and General employees (NUMGE) is sharing good practice with employees and trade unions in Poland on social dialogue in local government services
- > A project in Bulgaria is strengthening the dialogue and tripartite cooperation between the social partners as well as introducing a decent work agenda. Activities include comparative studies on how this is done in Bulgaria and Norway

¹ European Commission (2013) Industrial Relations in Europe 2012

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Following three calls for proposals organised by Innovation Norway – the programme operator in each country – 53 projects in the 13 beneficiary countries have been approved. Of the 53 projects, 29 are being implemented in cooperation with Norwegian social partners. All project promoters report to Innovation Norway on project implementation at least twice a year.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Norway has a strong tradition of tripartite consultations, bringing together workers, employers and governments in formulating and negotiating labour standards and policies. To take advantage of this experience, Norwegian social partners are taking part in several of the projects under the 'Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue'.

The International Labour Organisation is also involved, providing advice and quality assurance of the projects through its regional office in Budapest. Funding is available to support networking and foster project partnerships.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: GLOBAL FUND FOR DECENT WORK AND TRIPARTITE DIALOGUE

Country	Improved social dialogue and tripartite structures and practices	Enhanced understanding of benefits of decent work	Programme operator: Innovation Norway	Grant amount (€ million)
Bulgaria	•	•	■	0.48
Croatia	•	•	■	0.10
Cyprus	•	•	■	0.04
Czech Republic	•	•	■	0.70
Estonia	•	•	■	0.26
Hungary	•	•	■	0.83
Latvia	•	•	■	0.38
Lithuania	•	•	■	0.46
Malta	•		■	0.02
Poland	•	•	■	3.11
Romania	•	•	■	1.15
Slovakia	•	•	■	0.42
Slovenia	•	•	■	0.14
Total				8.10

ABOUT THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provide funding to:



AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Environmental management
- Climate change
- Civil society
- Cultural heritage and diversity
- Human and social development
- Green industry innovation
- Justice and home affairs
- Research and scholarships
- Decent work and social dialogue

* EEA Grants €993.5 million (Norway 95.7%, Iceland 3.2%, Liechtenstein 1.1%) – Norway Grants €804.6 million, financed by Norway alone