

# Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue



# Snapshot of results

- Improved social dialogue and tripartite dialogue structures and practices, resulting in more collective agreements. In some instances dialogue was established for the first time
- Enhanced understanding of the benefits of decent work through seminars, workshops and training sessions, indirectly reaching over 2 million people
- Study visits, research and analysis were supported and training materials developed to improve social dialogue
- Health and safety manuals were developed and introduced to workplaces



**28**  
partnership  
projects

**52**  
projects



## About the Fund

The Global Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue, funded by the Norway Grants, contributes to strengthened social dialogue and ensures that beneficiary countries are better placed to address decent work objectives, such as non-discrimination, life-long learning and receiving a living wage.

Norway has a strong tradition of tripartite consultation, bringing together workers, employers and governments in formulating and negotiating labour standards and policies.

Bilateral cooperation plays a very strong role in the Fund with the close involvement of Norwegian social partners to share expertise and experience.

**Fund:** €8 million

**Countries:** Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

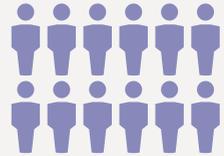
**Programme operator:**  
Innovation Norway

Front cover photo: Terje Samuelsen, Vice-President of the Norwegian Transport Workers Federation (left) and Jüri Lember, President of the Estonian Seamen's Independent Union.

More than  
**1 000**  
municipalities  
reached



Benefitting  
**13 000**  
people



**300**  
seminars, workshops  
and training sessions

## What is the issue?

Cooperation between employers, employees and government brings many benefits. In particular, it helps to establish trust and thereby reduces conflict.

Industrial relations in many of the countries of Central and Southern Europe remain generally weak and fragmented. This is reflected in a collective-bargaining coverage rate of 44% on average in the beneficiary countries, which is well below the EU-27 average of 66%\*.

## Strong cooperation

Establishing cooperation is a central aim of the Norway Grants. Strengthening ties between organisations and institutions brings benefits for the beneficiary countries and Norway alike.

**28** out of **52**

projects have been implemented with the involvement of a Norwegian partner.

\* European Commission (2013) Industrial Relations in Europe 2012

# Bulgaria

## Decent Work and Dialogue – Good Practice Exchange

**Project promoter:** Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria

**Norwegian partner:** Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO)

**Local partners:** Bulgarian Industrial Association

**Budget:** €221 000



The project raised awareness of decent work issues, such as guaranteeing rights at work and the freedom to associate. This resulted in a brochure on decent work and social dialogue. In the Norwegian system there is a labour court and a state mediator to help reach settlements when there is a failure to implement collective agreements. This was particularly interesting for Bulgaria and was presented at an international conference in September 2014.

### **Ms Yuliya Simeonova, Project Manager, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions Bulgaria:**

“We have introduced best practice on how to improve communication, negotiation skills, decision-making processes and social dialogue. We have trained 120 people in these skills, established an e-forum on decent work topics and raised the awareness on these issues with over 700 social partner representatives. The cooperation with Norway resulted in genuinely useful and practical advice on how we could improve dialogue and resolve collective labour disputes.”

### **Hans Øyvind Nilsen, Adviser, Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions:**

“The project included a study visit where we made a presentation on how our labour-courts system works. This had a very positive spin-off as the partners saw something that they could benefit from in a very real way. We are now working together to see where the best of Norwegian and Bulgarian practice may be developed.”

# Hungary



Members of the Estonian Seamen's Independent Union

## The World of Labour in Bilateral Agreements

**Project promoter:** Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists (MGYOSZ)

**Norwegian partner:** Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO)

**Local partners:** The National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions (MSZOSZ)

**Budget:** €188 000

Hungary adopted a new labour code in July 2012. The law introduced a new structure which allowed more room for agreement between workers and employers. The project involved a series of training courses on negotiating skills and different aspects of the new labour code. Written guidance materials were also prepared for wider distribution. The training prepared social partners for their new role in collective bargaining. Participants learnt from the Norwegian approach to negotiation and dialogue.

### **Ms Adrienne Bálint, Project Manager, Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists:**

"We also presented the Norwegian approach to social dialogue as best practice. Up to 200 representatives from the social partners were directly involved in the training and this has started to improve social dialogue and will hopefully continue to improve it in the long run. We also developed a website where people can ask for advice on labour law and social insurance issues."

### **Mr Rolf Negård, Director, Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise:**

"Hungary is undergoing major changes. Labour legislation has changed dramatically, and room for action for employer and employee organisations has improved. Exchanging experiences was and will continue to be of value for both parties."

# Poland



## Social Dialogue in the Local Government Sector

**Project promoter:** Association of Polish Cities

**Norwegian partner:** Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)

**Local partners:** The project involved employees and trade unions in Poland, as well as the largest Norwegian trade union, Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees (NUMGE)

**Budget:** €440 000

Activities included seminars and a national competition on social dialogue where the winners participated in a study trip to find out how social dialogue works in Norway. The project focused on local government services and enterprises with the aim of improving social dialogue to create a better working environment and ensure communication between workers and municipal leaders.

**Mr Andrzej Porawski, Executive Director, Association of Polish Cities:**

“Norway and Poland are two very different countries, but we have common challenges at the local level, for example, recruiting and keeping competent and motivated employees. The salary alone is insufficient as a motivational factor for employees – personal development and new challenges are also important.”

**Ms Gunn Marit Helgesen, President, Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities:**

“For us tripartite cooperation for the Norwegian local government sector is far more than the formal annual negotiations at national level – it is about cooperating at the national level with a view to delivering better services to the population as a whole.”

# Projects by country



# Meet two Norwegian partner organisations

NHO, the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, is the main representative organisation for Norwegian employers with companies ranging from small family-owned businesses to multi-national companies. NHO is a donor partner in four projects. Henrik Munthe, a lawyer with the NHO, describes their involvement in the Fund.



## What do you think is the main benefit of the Norwegian model?

The 'Norwegian model' has many characteristics, among the most important is the building of trust among the social partners. We have large organisations which are truly representative. The provisions in the legislation and collective agreements on industrial action are of great value.

## In your experience, how easy is it to transfer the Norwegian model to beneficiary countries?

The Norwegian model has evolved over more than one hundred years, and today the model works well for our country. It cannot be exported to other countries and implemented overnight – the right conditions have to be in place. This means that it is impossible to make a quick transfer, but hopefully other countries can find elements in the model which they can use in their system.

## What are the specific challenges that the beneficiary countries face?

I have only worked in three of the Norway Grants beneficiary countries so it's difficult to generalise. My impression is that it is quite common that both workers' and employers' organisations are often smaller and weaker than in Norway. In some countries, the government ignores the social partners.

## Have you learnt anything from the experience that you've found useful in Norway?

In my view, it is always important to learn from other ways of dealing with work challenges. In many countries the agreements are reached at enterprise level and in some cases it can be useful that issues are resolved among local partners who are most affected by the agreement. In Norway we have built up a large apparatus to handle collective bargaining and to get some ideas on how to make a system more efficient is always useful.

The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) is the largest workers' organisation in Norway. The LO has played an influential role in securing workers' rights. Hans Øyvind Nilsen, Adviser, International Department at LO presents his experience of working with social partners in the beneficiary countries.



**In Norway the involvement of social partners is well-established. How have you found social partner involvement in the beneficiary countries?**

Through the Norway Grants we work with nine different projects, in seven countries, each country has its own culture and history. If I were to generalise, it would be to say that the parties in all countries want to participate in social dialogue.

**What are the main challenges faced by the beneficiary countries in improving social dialogue?**

One of the main issues is trust. Without trust and respect you cannot have dialogue and cooperation, and without cooperation you won't find good solutions. Dialogue should help overcome conflicts and entrenched positions. Trust and respect must be earned and it takes a long time to build. Unfortunately, it can be torn down very quickly. Organisations must speak on behalf of their members and it is important to clarify roles on both sides.

**The tripartite model includes government involvement. Has the Fund been successful in persuading governments in the beneficiary countries to engage in social dialogue?**

Governments need to see the added value dialogue brings and how it can facilitate cooperation between the different social partners. The Fund allows social partners in the beneficiary countries to invite the government into their respective projects and lets them learn why this is an important system that benefits all partners.

**Do you think the Fund will make a lasting difference to workers' rights and help promote decent work?**

I am convinced that the project results and the awareness they create will lead to changes in the long run. I would also emphasise that it takes time to achieve lasting and sustainable changes. Norway does not have all the answers, but we have experience of what has worked well for us.

# Success stories

## Croatia\*

The project, which recently started, will include holding a national conference on the importance of tripartite dialogue. The promoters will also organise workshops at the national and regional level to determine priorities for future work. Promotional material will be developed to raise awareness on the importance of social dialogue.

**Project promoter:** Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia and the Croatian Employers Association

**Partner:** The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise and the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions

## Cyprus

Integration services and facilities for migrants were improved. A proactive dialogue between social partners was supported to enhance the integration of EU migrant workers.

**Project Promoter:** Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus

## Czech Republic

Trade unions and employers agreed on improved conditions for older employees. The provisions have been incorporated into Czech law. The need for this project followed a decision to increase the retirement age of those working in the textile and clothing industry.

**Project promoter:** Association of the Textile, Clothing and Leather Industry  
**Partner:** Federation of Norwegian Industries

\* Croatia became a member of the EEA, and consequently the 16th beneficiary country of the EEA and Norway Grants, in 2014. Programmes were launched at the end of April 2014.

## Estonia

Regular meetings with the Norwegian Transport Workers Federation showed what good social dialogue could look like in practice. Practical advice was given on what to avoid in negotiations with employers, how to achieve recognition and how to put a union structure in place that included collective agreements. The project has laid the foundations for future collective agreements.

**Project promoter:** Estonian Seamen's Independent Union

**Partner:** Norwegian Transport Workers Federation

## Latvia

The social dialogue in the Latvian construction sector has been improved. A collective agreement with the Building Materials Producers Association and the Latvian Builders Trade Union was agreed, as well as cooperation agreements on vocational training.

**Project promoter:** Latvian Builders Trade Union  
**Partner:** The Norwegian United Federation of Trade Unions

## Lithuania

The project resulted in six improved collective agreements and Lithuania's first ever collective agreement for an industry sector. The DESWOOD project, which was focused on the forest and wood work sectors, has been instrumental in improving dialogue with the state and improving working conditions. The agreements have involved national and regional tripartite councils.

**Promoter:** Federation of Lithuania Forest and Wood Worker Trade Unions  
**Partner:** Industri Energi, Norway

## Malta

The project assessed the current state of social dialogue, conducting research and drawing up recommendations on how to deal with more flexible employment contracts.

**Project promoter:** Department of Industrial and Employment Relations

## Slovakia

A nationwide project has improved the quality of social dialogue. It has resulted in recommendations on how social partners can voice their concerns and inform government on the impact of new laws on different sectors and to industry and employees as a whole. The project was called, 'Meaningful Social Dialogue – the Road to Change'.

**Project promoter:** Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia

## Slovenia

The 'Decent Retirement' project looked at supplementary pension insurance and made proposals on how it could be improved. It also examined how working conditions could be improved for older workers.

**Project promoter:** Slovenian Association of Trade Unions

**Partner:** Norwegian Engine Driver Association

## Romania

Twenty-four trainers from across Romania were trained in health and safety issues. The trainers have subsequently passed on their knowledge to over 200 teachers and the network continues to develop. The project was focused on the education sector and has contributed to better conditions in Romanian schools.

**Promoter:** Democratic Trade Union Confederation of Romania

**Partner:** Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions and Norwegian Union of School Employees



# About the EEA and Norway Grants

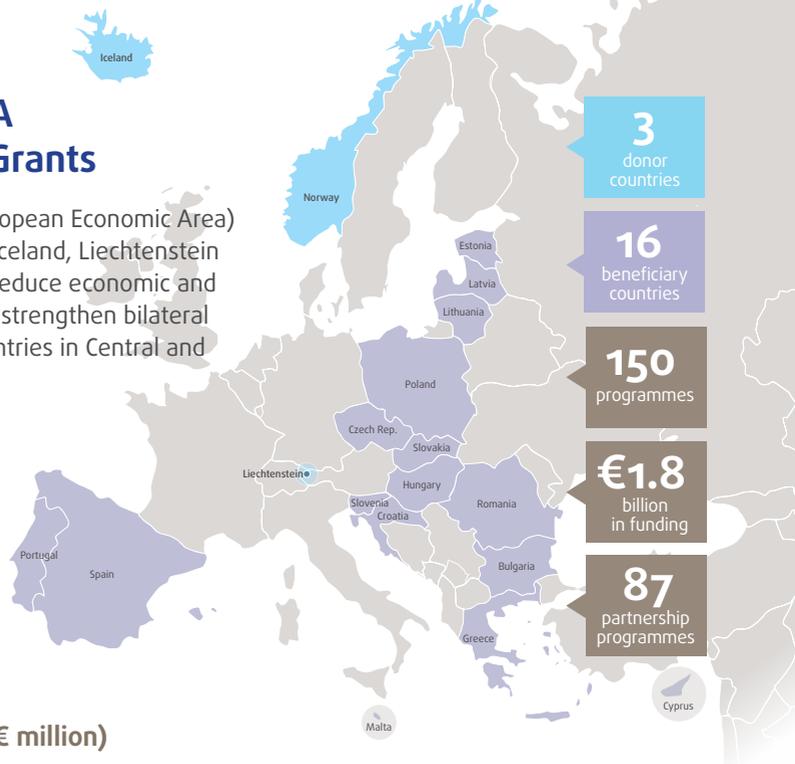
Through the EEA (European Economic Area) and Norway Grants, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway help to reduce economic and social disparities and strengthen bilateral relations with 16 countries in Central and Southern Europe.

## EEA Grants:

€993.5 million  
(Norway: 95.8%,  
Iceland: 3.0%,  
Liechtenstein: 1.2%)

## Norway Grants:

€804.6 million  
(Norway: 100%)



## Areas of support (€ million)



267.9

Climate change and renewable energy



152.5

Environmental protection and management



128.4

Green industry innovation



158.3

Civil society



375.9

Human and social development



201.4

Cultural heritage and diversity



169.0

Research and scholarships



145.2

Justice and home affairs



8.0

Decent work and tripartite dialogue



7.0

Carbon capture and storage

