



**European Union
Statement**

International Labour Conference

104th session

(1st-13th June 2015)

Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on the strategic objective of social protection (labour protection), under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008

Point 2 "What are in law or in practice the obstacles hindering universal labour protection? What are measures that can improve coverage, levels of protection and compliance so that all workers, irrespective of whom they work for or their contractual status, enjoy adequate protection?"

Geneva, 2 June 2015

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on the strategic objective of social protection (labour protection), under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008

Point 2 "What are in law or in practice the obstacles hindering universal labour protection? What are measures that can improve coverage, levels of protection and compliance so that all workers, irrespective of whom they work for or their contractual status, enjoy adequate protection?"

Thank you, Chairperson,

I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We welcome that a specific point of discussion is dedicated to identifying the obstacles to labour protection as well as to considering the measures that can ensure effective labour protection to all workers, irrespective of the type of employment relationship.

We welcome that the report proposes three key interrelated components (level, coverage and compliance) to assess labour protection in the areas of Occupational Safety and Health, wages, working time and maternity protection. We consider they are particularly relevant in today's discussion.

We would like to stress the gender dimension of our discussion. Ensuring effective labour protection is key for the proper participation of women to the labour market, for their equal treatment and for their health and dignity when it comes to maternity protection, pay and related benefits, working arrangements or working time.

We would like to focus on two points.

First, on the changing patterns of employment. Changes in the employment relationship, with a growing importance of non-standards forms of employment, are having important repercussions on

labour protection. Our interest is to provide a framework that meets the needs both of workers and of employers.

In the context of the European Union, we have a two pronged approach towards Non- Standard Forms of Employment. On one side there is the work of the European Union level social dialogue committees, where social partners of each industry address this issue and try to find specific solutions to their sector. On the other side the European Union has adopted a set of directives setting minimum standards in Member States regarding Non-Standard Forms of Employment such as temporary agency work, fixed term work and part time work, the latter on the basis of social partners' agreements. The aim is to improve the protection of workers and to provide equal treatment in comparison to other workers. At the same time they provide flexible working arrangements and have an appropriate place in the labour market where they can play a valuable role.

We also see the relevance of specific approaches to certain categories of workers to ensure appropriate labour protection.

Certain rules however need to apply to all. This is the case of fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association. In the European Union, a comprehensive regulatory framework in the area of occupational safety and health, working time and maternity protection provides for a set of minimum standards for the protection of all workers in the Member States.

We also recognise the increasing importance of global supply chains with respect to changing employment patterns and production process and look forward to our discussion on this topic next year.

Second, on implementation. This is a key issue for ensuring effective labour protection. The new European Union Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020 identifies the need to improve the implementation of OSH legislation, in particular in micro and small-sized enterprises, as one of the three key challenges. The other main challenges identified are the prevention of occupational and work-related diseases by tackling existing, new and emerging risks, also linked to new technologies, as well as the ageing workforce and the extension of working lives of both women and men.

We consider it key to focus ILO's efforts on the effective implementation of the existing international labour standards. We would also like in this regard to emphasize the pivotal role of labour inspection as well as other enforcement mechanisms. We further highlight the link of this discussion with the ones on transition from informal to formal economy and on SMEs taking place at this same ILC.

We also observe that in-work poverty, often due to insufficient wages or insufficient hours worked, has increased in many countries and that effective labour and social protection can contribute to addressing this challenge.

We therefore would like to call for a greater vigilance and responsiveness by labour market actors and institutions to the changing realities in the world of work and for a better involvement of the social partners in discussion on how to improve job quality, supporting governments, workers and employers alike in implementation of policies and to ensure effective and adequate labour protection to all workers, irrespective of the type of employment relationship.

In this context, we support the idea that labour regulation should reflect an increasingly diversified labour market and take account of the needs of both workers and employers ensuring adequate labour protection to all workers. We consider that job quality has a particularly important role to play encompassing adequate earnings, measures to improve work-life balance and quality of the work environment are needed.

Thank you Chairperson.