



European Union

Statement

ILO Governing Body, 325th session

29 October – 12 November 2015

**Area of critical importance: Strengthening workplace compliance through
labour inspection - GB.325/POL/4**

Geneva, 3 November 2015

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU Statement

Thank you, Chairperson.

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

The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Norway and the Republic of Moldova.

We welcome the opportunity to formulate our guidance on “Strengthening workplace compliance through labour inspection” as one of the eight areas of critical importance.

We welcome the introduction of workplace compliance as one of the priority areas to mobilize the ILO, individual countries and social partners for strengthening the enforcement and preventive functions of labour inspection and enhancing employer and worker collaboration in compliance by providing technical assistance and capacity building to government inspection and enforcement institutions and to social partners.

We agree that labour inspection plays an essential role in occupational safety and health, contributing to the protection of rights at work, preventing abuses and promoting economic and social development, in both developed and developing economies. As the report states, labour law enforcement is exclusively a public function and cannot be delegated.

Substantial progress has already been achieved, yet much remains to be done to address informal economy and undeclared work, lack of a preventive culture regarding occupational health and safety as well as situations of gross violations of rights such as human trafficking. In addition, non-standard forms of employment and outsourcing of work make the intervention of labour inspectors more difficult.

The ILO, together with other multilateral organizations, individual governments and social partners must continue their efforts to achieve an effective protection of occupational safety

and health, preventing breaches of employment protection rules and promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

The ILO's focus on compliance echoes EU policies such as the EU Strategic Framework on OSH for the period 2014-2020, which includes as one of its strategic objectives the improvement of national enforcement capacity and an initiative to set up a EU platform to fight undeclared work.

Compliance is a multi-faceted strategy with numerous inter-linkages with other areas of the ILO's intervention. The ILO's experience in different projects has demonstrated that policies work best when integrated with others. Of particular importance is the link to ACI 8 on the protection of workers from unacceptable forms of work.

Therefore we support the key elements of the strategy as proposed in point 5 of the report.

We welcome in particular the approach to comprehensive compliance responses, with an attention to sufficient resources and a coordination between different actors, including social partners. We could experience its results through the cooperation in the context of the EU sustainability Compact in Bangladesh following the Rana Plaza collapse and expect good results through the cooperation in Turkey following the Soma mining disaster.

Following up on the "labour inspection and undeclared work in the EU" useful project done in cooperation between the EU and ILO, we also look forward to the results of comparative studies on national compliance strategies and on labour inspection practices to reduce undeclared work mentioned in the report.

We share the view that more investment and resources in building institutional capacity where needed is a precondition to effective labour inspection and implementation of comprehensive strategies to workplace compliance, in particular in the domain of occupational health and safety and protecting rights at work. In this regard, the EU new OSH Strategic Framework includes a specific strategic objective to achieve a better enforcement of legislation in the EU. Exchange of good practice between European labour inspectorates is an instrument to improve their efficiency, carried out in particular through the EU Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee. The project done in EU-ILO cooperation on "Improving safety and health at work through a Decent Work Agenda" in Honduras, Malawi, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Zambia has also shown interesting results in this field.

We also welcome the attention to workers in the informal economy, to SMEs and to vulnerable workers in building up ILO knowledge, such as minimum wage violations in the domestic work sector mentioned in the report. We share however the report's assessment of the need to rationalise ILO multiple toolkits and products. Cooperation with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) could be useful in this regard.

We consider that the tools designed to map supply chains in Turkish mining sector and the AICESIS conference mentioned in paragraphs 9 and 15 of the report could be of particular relevance to the forthcoming ILC discussion on decent work in global supply chains.

We strongly feel that the outcomes of the recurrent discussion on labour protection that have been adopted at this year's International Labour Conference will facilitate the development of working conditions that offer better protection for workers and need to be taken into account for the ILO's future work on this topic.

In conclusion, we support the decision point provided that our guidance is taken into consideration.

Thank you, Chairperson.