



Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee of Local and Regional Governments

WORK PROGRAMME 2018-2019

(Adopted November 10, 2017)

Introduction

As providers and suppliers of vital services to citizen and businesses and as employers, local and regional governments are key to a socially and geographically balanced Europe.

Pressures on local and regional government expenditure as a significant part of overall public expenditure will continue, albeit with some variation depending on the country. In some countries, austerity policies have affected local and regional governments more heavily than the public sector as a whole. Budget reductions have led to cuts in the number of jobs as well as increased the workload. At the same time, Europe is facing demographic challenges due to an ageing workforce.

CEMR and EPSU stresses the importance of investment in quality public services and the stimulation of sustainable and inclusive growth and the job creation in Europe. This is especially needed at the local and regional level where adequate and socially just funded local and regional services are best placed to build cohesion and to respond to the needs of citizens, communities and businesses.

To respond to the challenges, the public sector is undergoing restructuring including restructuring of local and regional government, new forms of service delivery including digitalisation of services and public administration. Restructuring, new forms of service delivery and organisational changes have implications for the quality and/or the availability of services that citizens and businesses rely on and for the workers' job security, health and well-being at work. Their impact on the health of workers is underestimated. New forms of public services, for example related to digitalisation of services, demand new skills and competences. In order to adapt to the changes and to preserve and develop the quality of services, it is essential that we continuously develop new skills for news roles and jobs.

Municipalities and regions are large employers and of great importance for the local economy, which means that, the local and regional government sector needs sufficient, well-trained, motivated and well-paid workers. This demands good and transparent management and trade union rights including the right to information, consultation and negotiation, strong social dialogue and collective bargaining and an end to insecure and precarious employment.

Social dialogue is the most appropriate leverage to address the challenges, local and regional government face and to improve the quality of services and jobs.

These aspects and the context in which local and regional government is operating will be taken into account when formulating objectives, themes and tools for implementation of the sectoral social dialogue committee activities for 2018 and 2019.

Objectives

The objectives of the European sectoral social dialogue in local and regional government are to

Represent employers and trade unions in the sector in a social dialogue as intended in the EU Treaties, have discussions, share practices and make joint agreements on issues of common interest;

Strengthen the European social dialogue in the local and regional government sector consistent with the recognition of the general principle of local and regional self-government conferred by the Lisbon Treaty;

Contribute to strengthen the social dialogue at national, regional, local and at workplace level including information and consultation of workers by

- organising activities to maintain and reinforce the social dialogue between employer and trade union organisations in local and regional government in the Member States, EEA countries and candidate countries, making sure that these activities effectively achieve genuine outcomes and progress,
- promoting the ILO decent work agenda that includes job creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue with gender equality as crosscutting objective,
- promoting quality local and regional public services based on values of social and environmental responsibility and accountability
- exchanging information on labour market issues and promote the interests and good practices in local and regional government,
- responding to consultations and other initiatives by the European Commission, Parliament and Council, being pro-active and influencing legislation and policy in the fields of employment, rights at work, social protection and occupational health and safety related issues

Tools

1. The active engagement of as many national members as possible,
2. The social dialogue meetings (2 working group meetings and 1 plenary meeting per year),
3. One EU funded joint project on localising the European Semester,
4. Active twinning and networking between Committee members,
5. EPSU/CEMR secretariat presence and participation in national activities

Themes

This work programme covers a two-year period from 2018 to end of 2019. The steering committee of the social dialogue committee will continuously follow up on the priorities and the social dialogue committee will review the work programme at the annual plenary session.

Localizing the European Semester

CEMR and EPSU have submitted a project to the European Commission under the theme "Localizing the European Semester".

The main objective of this project is to increase CEMR and EPSU members' awareness about the function of the European Semester and to strengthen capacity building of social partners within the local and regional government sector at national level. In particular, in

those countries where social dialogue practices are less common and the role of the social partners need to be more structured and included in the national government procedures.

The inputs of European and national social partners of the local and regional sector will focus on the quality of public administration and on the three priorities recently highlighted by the European Commission in the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and reflected in the social scoreboard: equal opportunities and access to the labour market; dynamic labour markets and fair working conditions; public support, social protection and inclusion.

CEMR and EPSU will

- carry out the project in accordance with the project plan “Localizing the European Semester” approved by the European Commission
- conclude the project with an agreement at the plenary meeting in 2019

Implementing the framework for well-being at work

On December 5, 2016, the social dialogue committee adopted a joint framework for well-being at work. The framework is the outcome of a joint project funded by the European Commission. With this framework, CEMR and EPSU call on national social partners, the partners at workplace level, public authorities and other relevant stakeholders to act together to preserve and develop quality public services and to achieve concrete results and progress in favour of workers’ well-being.

To follow up on the framework, CEMR and EPSU will

- assess how local and regional governments handle the development of new and alternative ways of work i.e. temporary work, fixed-term contracts and bogus self-employment and consider the impact of this on the quality of jobs, work-life balance and public services,
- assess the demographic profile of the workforce, including in outsourced services, to identify the future implications of changes in composition of different age groups
- discuss and consider contributing to relevant initiatives in the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) including the Written Statement Directive

Follow-up on guidelines for migration and anti-discrimination

On December 5, 2016, the social dialogue committee adopted joint guidelines for migration and anti-discrimination in local and regional government.

The local level is where inclusion really takes place and local and regional governments play a key role when it comes to successful integration. Inclusion in the labour market is a key factor to inclusion in society. Local and regional governments are not only service providers, but also relevant employers.

Inclusion of migrants into the labour market should be done without lowering wages and working conditions for anyone. In order to avoid that migration becomes a risk to social cohesion, local and regional government have a strong interest in regulated good working conditions, safe and undeclared work, combating unsafe and undeclared work, and exploitative salaries.

To follow up on the guidelines, CEMR and EPSU will

- promote the joint guidelines for migration and anti-discrimination

- contribute to European initiatives aimed at securing the speedy integration of refugees and other migrants into the labour market
- monitor the joint guidelines for the national and local level through exchange of information and share good practices between the social partners at an annual discussion in the social dialogue committee

Promoting gender equality and follow-up on gender equality guidelines

The framework of Actions on Gender Equality, agreed by the cross-sectoral social partners, highlights actions that need to be taken by employers, trade unions and governments in achieving gender equality and meeting the Lisbon Strategy objectives.

On November 10, 2017, the social dialogue committee adopted a revised set of joint guidelines to draw up gender equality action plans in local and regional government. The guidelines aim to support regional and local activities on gender equality and to encourage a joint, long-term and sustained approach to equality by CEMR and EPSU members.

CEMR and EPSU will

- whenever it is relevant for joint discussions and initiatives, call for sex segregated data,
- monitor the use of the joint guidelines and share good practices for promoting gender equality at an annual discussion in the social dialogue committee
- seek to influence European legislative and non-legislative measures concerning gender equality, work-life balance, equal pay for work of equal value and gender mainstreaming.

Evaluation and next steps

The European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Local and Regional Government was established in 2004. In 2019, the committee will have been working for 15 years. The objectives of the committee are:

- to deliver opinions to the Commission on initiatives with regard to social and employment policy and the development of European policy as far as they have an impact on local and regional governments as employers, and employees in regional and local public authorities;
- to encourage and develop the social dialogue at European, national and local level in the local and regional governments sector.

CEMR and EPSU will:

- evaluate the outcome and impact of the sectoral social dialogue committee since 2004 and discuss further initiatives for the years to come.