

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS PLATFORM

The Employment and Social Affairs (ESAP) project is a regional project financed by the European Commission with the amount of 3 million Euro and jointly implemented by ILO and RCC in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The 3-year project, which started on 1 April 2016, aims to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional capacities of administrations, employers' and workers' organizations, enabling them to develop and effectively implement labour market and social policy reforms in their EU enlargement process.

Collectively addressing labour and socio-economic rights in the Western Balkan countries is an important pre-condition for continued social consolidation and social convergence on the path to EU membership. The European social dialogue is recognised as a pillar of the European social model. Social dialogue between governments, employers' and workers' organisations at all levels is crucial for ensuring countries sustainable development, economic growth, employment creations and business performance, as well as job quality and good employment practices.

The ESAP project is expected to continue for an additional three years from 2019 – 2022 with the financial support from the IPA Multi-country Programme.

The specific objectives and the related activities of the ILO-implemented action of ESAP are directed towards three Components:

Component 1 Improving the effectiveness of bipartite and tripartite social dialogue processes

The overall objective pursued under Component 1 is to increase the relevance of national tripartite bodies in national debates and policy making processes related to labour market reforms. The activities aim to strengthen the capacity of tripartite constituents to engage effectively in policy dialogue over a wide range of subject matters of general interest, including the EU accession process.

The project facilitates access to comparative data, networking and experience sharing with the view to boost cooperation and peer learning among social dialogue actors and institutions at regional level.

ILO has designed and implemented a peer review of the structure, functioning and effectiveness the ESCs. selected recommendations are currently being implemented by the ESCs with technical assistance from ILO.

A **Comprehensive Report** consolidating the findings, and recommendations as resulted from the ESC peer reviews is available at www.esap.online

Furthermore, the ILO supports the enhancement of mechanisms for amicable settlement of labour disputes and facilitates an interactive sharing of experience and good practices through the creation of a Network of Agencies for Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes in CEE countries.

The CEElex database is a policy tool made available to national policy makers including social partners. It covers 13 CEE countries, and provides access to systematised up to date comparative data in the areas of labour law and industrial relations. Within the ESAP project, CEElex is being updated yearly through contributions of CEElex network members.

Component 2 Strengthening labour inspectorates

The activities under Component 2 contribute to developing cooperation among labour inspections in the Western Balkans, promoting information and knowledge sharing related to the alignment of legislation to international labour standards and EU directives in the field of occupational health and safety, strategies and tools for the formalization of the informal employment and undeclared work, and institutional responses to compliance problems.

ILO has provided support in the preparation and implementation of labour inspection campaigns in the construction sector, including drafting of a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the thematic campaigns and drafting of national action plans for inspection campaigns in the construction sector.

A total of 130 labour inspectors has been trained and campaign material has been tailored, translated into local languages and distributed.

Four national campaigns have been launched by the labour inspectorates in Spring 2018, in Montenegro, Kosovo*, Bosnia and Herzegovina RS and Albania.

Component 3 Technical Assistance and cross-fertilization with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

The ILO cooperates with RCC on the design and use of a virtual platform aiming to provide access to relevant information, laws and research documents and also to the extent possible to provide space for online interaction among stakeholders.

Furthermore, ILO provides technical assistance to the Regional Cooperation Council on demand, in particular in relation to design and implementation peer review of employment policy programmes as well as provision of EU and international best practices on selected policy programmes.

The concept and content of the ESAP virtual platform has been defined and agreed with RCC and its design and public launching under the name www.esap.online.

For further information:

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This project is funded by the European Union



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This project is implemented by International Labour Organization