

**Employment and Social Affairs Platform
Meeting of Ministries of Labour of the Western Balkan Economies**

13 - 14 December 2016
Podgorica, Montenegro

Introduction and Objectives

This event is organized in the framework of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP) regional project, which aims to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional capacities of national administrations in the areas of labour market and social policy reform.

Participants in the event will be representatives of Ministries in charge of labour and employment, responsible for their institution's contribution in the development, implementation and monitoring of employment and social policy measures, including initiatives such as the Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) and the Employment and Social Reform Programmes (ESRPs). Additionally, representatives of RCC and ILO, as implementing partners of the project, will participate. An invitation will be extended to representatives of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission as well as to other partner international organizations.

The aim of the meeting will be to present and discuss with participants key findings of a regional analysis of employment and social policy measures in the Western Balkan economies, share national experiences in developing and implementing labour market measures with a focus on those prioritized in national strategic documents such as the ERP and ESRP, and agree on collaborative steps to enhance the sharing of good experiences and mutual learning.

Background

The regional project 'Employment and Social Affairs Platform', which began its implementation in March 2016 and will last for 3 years, is a regional project financed by the European Commission and jointly implemented by RCC and ILO in the Western Balkan economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The project aims to strengthen regional cooperation and institutional capacities of national administrations, employers' and workers' organizations, enabling them to develop and effectively implement labour market and social policy reforms in their EU accession process.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

One of the project goals is to support the processes for preparation, monitoring and follow up of employment and social policies with a focus on the relevant measures in the Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs) and the Employment and Social Reform Programmes (ESRPs). In this context, RCC has commissioned a regional study that will:

- Analyse the major features and identify strengths and weaknesses of the national employment and labour market strategies, including the ESRPs in the economies where these have been developed and the measures prioritised in the ERPs;
- Create a catalogue of recent, current and planned national employment and labour market measures, in particular those referring to active labour market policies and Public Employment Services from which case examples can be developed and around which peer reviews can be organised;
- Summarize the indicators included in the above mentioned strategies and documents;
- Propose lessons learned and recommendations for the design of employment and labour market strategic measures and their implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Make a regional comparative overview of the major findings and common recommendations.

Initial findings of this study will be presented and discussed with participants, with a view to agreeing on a set of recommendations for enhancing their impact as well as possible tools that will help strengthen sharing of good practices and relevant knowledge.

Draft Agenda

Tuesday, 13 December 2016

Venue: Premier Hotel, Podgorica

08.30 – 09.00 Registration of Participants

09.00 – 09.15 Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Edina Desic, Director General for Labour Market and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro

Kiril Kiryakov, International Policy Officer, DG EMPL

Nand Shani, ESAP Project Team Leader, RCC

09.15 – 09.45 Labour Market and Employment Reforms from the EU perspective and the relevance for the Western Balkans

Overview of European Employment Strategy in the framework of the Europe 2020 growth strategy and its implementation through the European Semester. Recent developments and its relevance for the Economic Reform Programmes and Employment and Social Reform Programmes in the Western Balkans.

Christiane Westphal, International Policy Officer, DG EMPL

09.45 – 11.00 **Preliminary Key Findings from the Regional Analysis of National Employment and Labour Market strategic documents and actions**

A team of experts selected by RCC will present initial findings of features of major employment and labour market strategic documents in the Western Balkans economies, describe some of the analysed strengths and weaknesses and provide a regional comparative overview

Representatives of FREN – Foundation for the Advancement of Economics

Questions and Answers

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

11.30 – 12.30 **An Overview of employment and labour market measures in the Western Balkan Economies and recommendations for enhancing their design, implementation and monitoring**

The expert team will present an overview of key labour market measures and steer discussion on enhancing their design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Representatives of FREN – Foundation for the Advancement of Economics

Discussion

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 16.00 **National Presentations on Policy Measures Development and Implementation**

Beneficiary representatives will present an update on their work in developing employment and social policy measures as part of their ongoing actions with a focus on ERP and ESRP measures.

National representatives (15' each delegation)

Questions and Answers

16.00 – 16.30 **Good practices from the region**

Social impact assessment of structural measures in the Economic Reform Programme – the case of Serbia

Ivan Sekulovic and Jelena Milovanovic, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Serbia

Questions and Answers

16.30 – 17.15 **A view from International Partners**

International organizations will present their key activities and perspectives on employment creation and labour market development in the Western Balkan economies

*Mauricio Dierckxsens and Susanne Nielsen, ILO
Cristina Mereuta, ETF*

Questions and Answers



17.15 – 17.30 **Conclusions of Day 1**

19.00 Dinner

Venue: tbc

Wednesday, 14 December 2016

Venue: Premier hotel, Podgorica

09.30 – 09.45 **Recap of Day 1 and Introduction to Day 2**

09.45 – 11.30 **ESAP tools for supporting regional cooperation on employment and labour market employment policies – planned activities for 2017**

The presentation will focus on a proposed concept, scope and terms of reference for a peer review exercise of selected employment policies, the terms of reference for an annual employment report, the establishment of a regional labour market database and technical in-country assistance

Nand Shani, ESAP Team Leader, RCC

Roundtable discussion

11.30 – 12.00 **Conclusions and Next Steps**

12.00 – 13.30 Lunch

Departure of Participants

The organizer reserves the right to amend the meeting agenda and timings.