



A New Start for a **Strong** Social Dialogue

Conference “Promoting and reinforcing the EU social dialogue”, 5-6 July 2016

A new start for Europe: President Juncker's agenda



The social market economy can only work if there is social dialogue.

Social dialogue suffered during the crisis years.

Now it must be resumed at national and especially at European level.

I would like to be a President of social dialogue

5th March 2015: The Commission 'new start'



A high level conference marking the new start for social dialogue took place in Brussels on 5 March 2015

- Organised by the European Commission
- Speakers included: EU SPs Secretary Generals at both cross-industry and sectoral level, President Juncker, VP Dombrovskis, Commissioner Thyssen, EP President Schulz, Council Presidency
- Discussions included obstacles to social dialogue as well as concrete ways to strengthen social dialogue throughout the EU representatives
- 6 thematic workshops
- More than 150 participants

Thematic groups

Thematic Group 1: Social dialogue, economic governance, capacity building

- Improving the functioning and the effectiveness of social dialogue and the capacity building of social partners at national level
- Improving the involvement of social partners in the European Semester and in assessing, designing, agreeing and implementing relevant reforms/policies

II. Thematic Group 2: Social dialogue, policy making, law making

- Improving the involvement of social partners in policy making
 - Clarifying the relation between social partners' agreements and the better regulation agenda.

- **OBJECTIVE:** To substantiate respective commitments and to monitor the follow up to the New Start for social dialogue
- **TIMEFRAME** – July 2015 – January 2016
- **PARTICIPANTS:** social partners (12 members on each side), representatives of the LV, LU, NL, SK and MT presidencies, Council Secretariat and the Commission services
- **CHAIR:** The Commission head the meetings
- Chatham house rules
- **Thematic Groups meant to lead to a tangible joint product**

January 2016: EU Social Partners agree on a joint declaration

Approved by the SPs at Thematic Group meeting on 26/27 of January 2016

Declaration on a new start for a strong Social Dialogue

1. Recalling that article 9 TFEU stipulates that the Union shall take into account promotion of high levels of employment and social considerations in definition and implementation of all its policies.
2. Recalling that in article 151 TFEU the promotion of dialogue between management and labour is recognised as a common objective of the EU and the Member States and that in article 152 TFEU the European Union recognises and promotes the role of social partners at its level, irrespective of the enterprises or workers they represent and on an equal footing, taking into account the diversity of national systems. It shall facilitate dialogue between the social partners, respecting their autonomy.
3. Recognising that social dialogue forms part of the European social model and is a crucial factor for a well-functioning social market economy. Social dialogue also implies industrial relations models in which social partners can autonomously exercise their practices of collective bargaining and employee participation.
4. Acknowledging that social dialogue can be organised at cross-industry, sectoral or territorial level, taking place at all appropriate levels from the company to the regional, national and European level. In all cases, social dialogue requires social partners that are strong, representative, autonomous, mandated and equipped with the capacities needed. Social partners also need to dispose of the institutional settings allowing for their dialogue to take place and to be effective.
5. Welcoming the fundamental role of the European social dialogue as a significant component of EU employment and social policy making. It contributes to devise arrangements and instruments that balance the needs of enterprises and workers across Europe. The European social dialogue has developed gradually, at cross-industry level since its inception in the Maastricht Treaty, and at sectoral level at the end of the 1990s. A more autonomous dialogue has taken shape progressively since the signature of the EU Social Partners' Laeken Declaration in 2001 (*reference to box**), which is positive. Nevertheless, further progress towards a stronger social dialogue is necessary.
6. Acknowledging that there is no blueprint for a functioning social dialogue. Social dialogue arrangements and processes vary across Member States, reflecting the countries' different histories and economic and political situations. While this diversity must be respected, social partners' role should be promoted. A precondition for a successful, value-adding social dialogue is that it is result-oriented. Highlighting that social partners are uniquely placed to address work-related issues through the dialogue and negotiation process that characterises their relationship. They can also assess the direct or indirect impact of EU policies on employment and social affairs. Their knowledge and experience of the employment and social situation, their legitimacy, representativeness, mandate and capacity to negotiate make social partners essential actors to improve governance and policy-making. They must be clearly distinguished from other organisations representing civil society.

Content

- Preamble
- Guiding principles/ Key messages on four topics
- Actions for social partners themselves, European Commission, European Council
- ETUC website: https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/press-release/files/08.02.16_declaration_social_dialogue_to_commission_council.pdf

• ~~BE LINK?~~ (delete- we should update our website first)


16 June 2016: EU Council Conclusions



Content

- Political context
- Acknowledgments...
- Welcome...
- Calls on Member States and EU Commission to take action...
- Invites Social Partners Council...
- <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10449-2016-INIT/en/pdf> (available in all EU languages)

27 June 2016: Quadripartite statement is signed



EU 2016

A New Start for Social Dialogue

Statement of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Social Partners

The promotion of dialogue between management and labour is recognised in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as a common objective of the Union and the Member States. The Union recognises and promotes the role of social partners at its level, taking into account the diversity of national systems, and facilitates the dialogue between the social partners, respecting their autonomy.

The Commission initiated, at a high level conference on 5 March 2015, an initiative for a New Start for Social Dialogue. At that High-Level Conference, the Social Partners and the Commission agreed that the new start for social dialogue should aim for a more substantial involvement of the social partners in the European Semester, a stronger emphasis on capacity building of national social partners, a strengthened involvement of social partners in EU policy and law-making and a clearer relation between social partners' agreements and the better regulation agenda.

The signatories welcome the fundamental role of the European social dialogue as a significant component of EU employment and social policy making, and therefore welcome the strengthening of the dialogue between management and labour.

In this perspective

The European social partners agreed to focus their efforts on the following fields of action.

The cross-industry European social partners¹:

- will contribute to enhance the Tripartite Social Summit and the Macroeconomic Dialogue;
- will implement the actions agreed in their autonomous work programme 2015 – 2017 on improving capacity-building and implementation outcomes. This will include where appropriate supportive actions to their members, as agreed in the context of the newly established Social Dialogue Committee sub-group mandated to look into follow-up and implementation of EU social dialogue instruments;
- plan to implement a joint project in 2016-2018 which includes amongst others:

¹ BUSINESSEUROPE, CEEP, UEAPME and ETUC (and the liaison committee Eurocadres/ CEC)

Content

- NO PREAMBLE but...
- Actions by social partners (based on their Joint Declaration)
- Actions by the European Commission (based on Council Conclusions)
- Actions by Member States (based on Council Conclusions)
- <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2562&furtherNews=yes>



Concluding remarks

The three documents can be milestones that will enable to strengthen social dialogue at EU and national levels

First time that we have a quadripartite document on social dialogue, first time that we have Council Conclusions on social dialogue

Lengthy process, difficult at times but social partners were able to act together and achieve meaningful results

Strong bipartite social dialogue should go hand in hand with appropriate framework conditions and capacity building support by public authorities and social partners

Various challenges ahead that we need to tackle together to make the commitments contained in these outputs to translate into real actions