A New Start for a Strong Social Dialogue

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Group 1: Social dialogue, economic governance, capacity building</th>
<th>II. Thematic Group 2: Social dialogue, policy making, law making</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improving the functioning and the effectiveness of social dialogue and the capacity building of social partners at national level</td>
<td>• Improving the involvement of social partners in policy making</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improving the involvement of social partners in the European Semester and in assessing, designing, agreeing and implementing relevant reforms/policies</td>
<td>• Clarifying the relation between social partners’ agreements and the better regulation agenda.</td>
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| **OBJECTIVE:** To substantiate respective commitments and to monitor the follow up to the New Start for social dialogue |
| **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 28/27 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 promote of high levels of employment and social cohesion in definition and implementation of all policies.

2. Recalling that in article 156 TFEU, the promotion of dialogue between management and labour is recognized as a common objective of the EU and the Member States and that in Article 157 TFEU the European Union recognises and promotes the role of social partners at all levels, irrespective of the enterprises or workers they are called on to negotiate, taking into account the diversity of national systems. It should facilitate dialogue between the social partners, respecting their autonomy.

3. Recognizing 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 powers of collective bargaining and employee participation.

4. Acknowledging that social dialogue can be organized 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, numbered 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 Monnet Treaty, and at sectoral level at the end of the 1980s. A social environment dialogue has taken shape progressively since the signature of the EU Social Partners’ Looking Declaration in 2004 (reference to be*), 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 labour 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 specifically oriented. Highlighting that social partners are uniquely placed to address workplace-related issues through the dialogue and negotiation process that characterizes their relationship. They can also assess the direct or indirect effect of EU policies on employment and social affairs. Their knowledge and expertise 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 organizations representing civil society.

Content

- Preamble
- Guiding principles/ Key messages on four topics
- Actions for social partners themselves, European Commission, European Council


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...
27 June 2016: Quadripartite statement is signed

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.