

SOCIAL PARTNERS' FORUM

„ROLE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN ENSURING THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND QUALITATIVE WORK PLACES”

Tuesday 31 March, 2015

DESCRIPTION OF THE FORUM

This year the European Union celebrates 30-year anniversary of European social dialogue. Social dialogue as a tool allowed the EU and its member states to promote social peace, to strengthen European social model, to foresee and to adapt to economic and social changes. At the same time in recent years, as shown in the study of the European Commission – Industrial Relations in Europe 2014, social dialogue has suffered under the economic crisis. In addition to the already existing differences of social dialogue practices, due to the economic crisis decentralisation of collective bargaining increased and coverage of collective bargaining agreements decreased in the EU member states. Besides, social partners – employees' and employers' organizations – experienced the decrease of the number of their members and capacity challenges. The European Commission acknowledges that countries with an efficient system and practices of social dialogue are economically more developed and more competitive and are better able to adapt to the consequences of the crisis. Therefore, in order to implement the targets of the strategy "Europe 2020", social dialogue needs to be activated and involvement of social partners in management of macro-economic reforms within the framework of so-called European semester needs to be ensured.

During the social partners' forum European and national level social partners, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) experts will discuss and share examples of good practice, in order to find solutions for the strengthening social dialogue and social partners at European, national, sectoral and enterprise level. During the social partners' forum a high-level panel discussion will be held devoted to the role, current situation and challenges of social dialogue for economic growth and qualitative employment, as well as three parallel sessions will be held devoted to particular level of social dialogue – tripartite social dialogue at national and regional level, sectoral and enterprise level social dialogue.

Participants of **the high-level panel discussion** will acquaint themselves with the situation and comparative perspectives of social dialogue in EU member states, will discuss and provide recommendations for the renewal of social dialogue by balancing employers' and employees' interests for economic growth, high quality jobs and competitiveness.

During the parallel session **System of Social Dialogue for Economic Growth and Competitiveness** participants will acquaint themselves with comparative perspectives of tripartite social dialogue at national and regional level in the EU, the role of social partners on development of economic and social policy, as well as on elaboration of normative acts. Whereas, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Czech social partners will share examples of good practice and proposals for development of tripartite social dialogue.

The parallel session **Sectoral Social Dialogue for Productivity and Competitiveness** is devoted to the development trends, challenges and opportunities of sectoral social dialogue in the EU. Sectoral social partners from the Netherlands, Germany and Latvia will present examples of good practice and together with EUROFOUND and European sectoral social partners will provide recommendations for strengthening sectoral social dialogue and its structure.

Participants of the parallel session **Industrial Relations for Productivity and Competitiveness** will focus on the social dialogue and collective bargaining negotiations at enterprise level. Special attention will be given to social dialogue and collective bargaining negotiations in small, medium and micro enterprises. Good practice examples from Finland, Sweden, Latvia and Austria will be presented in this session. The national and European level social partners will share recommendations for the strengthening social dialogue at enterprise level.

At the conclusion of the forum **Recommendations of the Social Partners' Forum** will be presented for the development of social dialogue at the EU, national, regional, sectoral and enterprise level. Recommendations will be submitted to the European social partners, the European Commission and the Presidency of the Council of European Union, EU Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO), whose meeting will take place on 20 – 22 April 2015, in Riga.