

Social dialogue for a successful future of work

Kolping International's contribution to the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference from 28 May to 8 June 2018 in Geneva, prepared by Dr Hildegard Hagemann, Kolping International/German Commission for Justice and Peace (Deutsche Kommission Justitia et Pax)

Dear chairpersons, dear delegates,

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on the Director-General's report on behalf of the Catholic Social Association KOLPING INTERNATIONAL, which has around 400,000 members in over 60 countries.

The majority of people all over the world work in informal, sometimes extremely precarious working conditions. The ILO debates on the importance of the informal economy in 2001 and 2002 helped to draw attention to this. It is therefore a good sign that this year's report mentions companies from both the informal and the formal economy when it comes to presenting the employment potential and the corresponding employment policy.

Decent work and poverty reduction must go hand in hand in ILO work. The ILO initiatives on poverty reduction, on green employment and now also on women in the world of work bear witness to this. The ILO is on the right way and this is also noticed by the public! It is important and right that the ILO has recaptured its way back to the negotiating tables of politics and business. We must continue along this path.

The negotiations on the rights of domestic workers were a breakthrough for the recognition of informal workers in the negotiations. They opened a window to new ways of involving 'stakeholders' who do not appear in the classical tripartitism. Not all workers and not all self-employed people are represented by the social partners today.

We welcome the ILO's success over the past two years in strengthening social dialogue instruments in many member countries as well as supporting governments, introducing dispute resolution mechanisms and promoting labour inspection. For the implementation of ILO instruments such as R 202 for the establishment of Social Protection Floors and R 204 for the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy, the involvement of further stakeholders is rightly seen as necessary.

However, we miss a critical approach to the problem that social dialogue is being cut back in some Member States, allegedly in order not to hinder economic competitiveness. This, together with the phenomenon of 'shrinking space' for civil society organizations, is a cause for concern. As the guardian of tripartitism the ILO must be careful at the negotiating tables of the UN (the Paris Agreement, the Global Compact on Migration), the G20, the WTO, the Bretton Woods organizations that these spaces for participation and co-determination do not become narrower.

The Director-General's report also highlights the ILO's efforts to enter into dialogue with others. We also expressly welcome this, especially as the joint international conference of ILO, Caritas internationalis and the then Pontifical Council Justitia et Pax on 'Sustainable