

Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms

SSCSSR(2010)5SC3FINREP

5th MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

28 May 2010

Hotel Radika, Mavrovo

MEETING REPORT

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the draft agenda

Ms Irena RISTESKA welcomed the participants and wished the Committee members a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Mavrovo.

According to Article 7 of its Terms of Reference, the Committee appointed Mr Nenad RAKIĆ to chair the meeting.

The draft (annotated) agenda of the meeting was adopted without discussion.

2. Statement by the Secretariat

(a) Report of the 4th meeting of the RSC

The Report of the 4th meeting of the Committee has been adopted by written procedure prior to the meeting. Hence the Committee confirmed its decision.

(b) Reports on National Training Events

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee about the National Training Event on Social Security Coordination held in Sarajevo on 22-23 March 2010. Due to the fact that the meeting was translated into the local language, a good number of participants were involved. According to the evaluation forms received, and the report prepared thereof, participants considered in general terms that the event was well organised.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK thanked the Secretariat for the organisation of this very useful event. She also shared the opinion expressed by the participants at the end of the meeting, notably that it would be highly beneficial to involve more political or high level officials in similar events in the future.

Mr Alexander KOSTANYAN informed the Committee about the Training Event on Social Security Coordination held on 22-23 April 2010 in Pristina for the participants from Kosovo¹ and Albania. The meeting was translated into Albanian. The meeting was devoted to capacity raising and institutional development for the realisation of the negotiation process on bilateral agreements in the area of social protection. Participants highly evaluated the training course and expressed a wish of continuing with similar trainings in the future.

Mr Mentor MORINA thanked the Secretariat for the organisation of the event. Being at the beginning of negotiation process, participants highly evaluated the experts and the information provided.

Ms Diana BEQIRI informed the Committee that the training event has clarified many issues regarding the coordination of health insurance schemes and proved to be very efficient. She requested the Secretariat about the possibility of organising another training event in the same area in Tirana.

Ms Irena RISTESKA informed the Committee that “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” will start negotiating the conclusion of a bilateral agreement with Albania in September 2010.

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

Mr Nenad RAKIĆ informed the Committee that, few months ago a bilateral agreement between Serbia and Turkey has been ratified and will come into force by the end of 2010.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN proposed to the Secretariat that involving Turkish experts in similar trainings in the future would be beneficial due to the fact that they have high qualification with regard to the area concerned and Turkey has bilateral agreements with most of the EU and South-Eastern European countries. Turkey's experience in concluding and implementing the social security agreements with most of the EU and Balkan Countries dates back early 1960s.

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee about two other national training events which were planned to be organised (in Turkey and in Serbia), but were postponed due to organisational constraints.

(c) Reports on Regional Seminars on Pensions and Health Care

Mr Alexander KOSTANYAN informed the Committee about the 3rd Regional Seminar on Health Care held in Tirana on 18 March 2010 and the 2nd Regional Seminar on Pensions held in Tirana on 19 March 2010. Being the two last seminars in the series of seminars on health care and pensions, the final products provided by high level civil servants were two joint declarations. The texts of the declarations on pensions and on health care will be incorporated into the Draft Ministerial Declaration to be presented to the Committee under item IV of the meeting Agenda.

Mr Nenad RAKIĆ appreciated the achievements made during the two events and informed the Committee about the positive feedback he received from the authorities.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK considered the two seminars to be represented by very competent participants in their full capacity and addressing issues in a very successful way.

Mr Sixto MOLINA also considered discussions during the two events to be extremely positive.

(d) Report on Speaking Days

Ms Tanja KALOVSKA informed the Committee about the two rounds of Speaking Days between Montenegro and Bosnia & Herzegovina which took place on 9 December 2009 in Podgorica and on 16-17 February 2010 in Sarajevo respectively. During these two events all problematic issues have been solved and Beneficiary Parties agreed on the information exchange stipulated by Article 16 of the bilateral agreement in order to solve the rest of the pending cases. A new bilateral agreement was envisaged to be developed.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK considered that the meeting was important to further discuss the issue at a bilateral level. She also stressed the importance of drafting a new bilateral agreement. Any possible assistance by the Programme with this regard would be appreciated.

Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ supported the request regarding the need for assistance in drafting a new bilateral agreement between Montenegro and Bosnia & Herzegovina.

(e) Report on the Third Regional Summer School

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee that according to the preliminary results of the evaluation report, and compared to the last two summer schools, evaluation of speakers was slightly lower. Organisational part of the activity, however, was evaluated as positive. Most of the remarks referred to the tight schedule of the training process. Changes in the programme (introducing a new course on health care replacing one on social security philosophy) were

welcomed. Participants considered training materials to be too extensive and the course too intensive. They also complained about too many optional (additional) lectures which were not included in the final examination.

Mr Kenichi HIROSE considered the analysis of the evaluation report to be very useful and invited to focus on improving the selection procedure of participants to the summer schools.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK asked the Secretariat about the lessons learnt from continuous evaluation of the summer schools as being very intensive and short in duration.

Mr Sixto MOLINA assured the Committee that the Secretariat is currently looking into this issue.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN considered summer schools to be one of the most beneficial activities of the Programme and encouraged the Committee and the Secretariat to find a way to further improve the Agenda of the Summer School in the light of the experiences learnt in the past two years.

3. Current Activities

(a) Preparation for the Meeting of the State Secretaries

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee about the preparation for the Meeting of the State Secretaries which will take place on 1 July 2010 in Ankara. He also informed the Committee about the staff changes in the Secretariat, as well as how the Secretariat will be represented at the Meeting. Hotel Rixos in Ankara was selected as a meeting venue out of four offers received. Simultaneous interpretation into four languages will be arranged. The meeting will take place approximately half a day with introductory speeches, interventions by national delegations to share their impressions of the Draft Ministerial declaration and one hour will be left for discussions. The 6th Meeting of the Committee will take place the following day.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN thanked the Secretariat for organising the event in Turkey. He assured the Committee that the Turkish authorities and the LPO will do their utmost in organising this event. He also confirmed that the hotel selected is well equipped for such kind of high level meetings and is well situated in the city.

Mr Kenichi HIROSE requested whether a formal invitation will be addressed to the ILO in order to take part in the Meeting of the State Secretaries.

Mr Sixto MOLINA confirmed that the Secretariat will send a formal invitation to the ILO.

(b) Legal Analysis and Sets of Studies

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee about the advancement made regarding the two sets of studies. While the one concerning labour migration is almost finished, the other one concerning pension systems is still under preparation. He assured the Committee that once the reports are ready, they will be translated into different local languages of the Beneficiary Parties.

He stressed the fact that concerning the study on pensions, only three replies on the questionnaire prepared by the expert were received so far.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN informed the Committee that the questionnaire on seasonal labour migration has already been responded and Turkish authorities have endeavoured all they could with regard to replying the questionnaire on pensions as requested.

Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ informed the Committee that answers to the pension questionnaire were submitted to the Secretariat last week. She also stressed that initial plans were to cover the area of disability insurance while the questionnaire was dealing with a larger scale on pension insurance.

Mr Sixto MOLINA assured that the expert will be contacted by the Secretariat to discuss upon this possible misunderstanding.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK stressed the complexity of the procedures regarding the questionnaire, especially the need for translating it from English and translating the answers back to English once they are ready. She informed the Committee that the answers will be submitted to the Secretariat, however, it will take more than one month to finalise them.

Mr Mentor MORINA informed the Committee that while replies to the 1st questionnaire have been already submitted, the answers to the 2nd questionnaire are currently being translated and will be submitted soon.

Ms Diana BEQIRI supported the concern raised by Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK concerning the complexity of the procedure due to the need of translation the questionnaire from English into Albanian and back.

Mr Sixto MOLINA considered the possibility in future similar situations for the Secretariat to provide Beneficiary Parties with non-official translations.

Mr Alexander KOSTANYAN informed the Committee about the set of Legal Analysis which the Secretariat is supporting to be done by independent experts according to topics proposed by the Committee Members at the 4th RSC meeting in December 2009. Four reports have been already finalised and will be submitted to the Beneficiary Parties on the week following the meeting. Two reports are still in preparation, while two other reports haven't been started due to the fact that the Secretariat is still searching appropriate experts. He informed the Committee that final reports will be published on the web page of the Programme and translated into the language of the Beneficiary Party for which it has been prepared.

4. Draft Ministerial Declaration

Mr Sixto MOLINA introduced the Draft Ministerial Declaration and informed the Committee about the background of its preparation.

Prof. Danny PIETERS recalled the two meetings in Tirana where the conclusions were agreed upon. He presented these conclusions (on pensions) to the Committee.

Prof. Paul SCHOUKENS presented the conclusions on health care to the Committee.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN unveiled the proposals that introduce amendments, mostly of editorial nature, to the Draft Ministerial Declaration with a view to catching the right wording of and hence, improving the document. He also expressed the view of considering abridging the Draft.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK proposed to include reference to the new EU Regulation 987/09 in the Draft.

Mr. Nenad RAKIĆ proposed to eliminate paragraphs in the Draft referring to the overall work of the programme.

The Committee empowered the Secretariat to consider the proposed changes in consultation with the academic directors and accept proposals of editorial nature

5. Organisation of coming events

Mr Sixto MOLINA presented the plans regarding the future National Training Events to be implemented until the end of November 2010. Another activity planned was a meeting with the Permanent Representatives of the Beneficiary Parties to be organised in the Council of Europe Headquarters (in Strasbourg).

6. Any other business

Mr Sixto MOLINA, upon request of the Committee, and concerning the possibility to have additional activities organised in the framework of the Programme via its extension for several months, indicated that, in principle such extension was not possible according to the information addressed to him by the EC representatives. He also informed the Committee of the sums that could remain unspent by November if the activities to be organised are to be kept as scheduled.

The Committee decided to mandate its Chairperson to draft a letter to be addressed to the Secretariat requesting to contact the European Commission to examine the possibility of extending the duration of the Programme in order to accommodate the expectations of Beneficiary Parties within the budget already allocated.

Mr Kenichi HIROSE informed the Committee about the project on Social Security Coordination which started in Moldova. He stressed that the ILO is opened for potential cooperation between the two projects. He also informed the Committee about the ILO International Training Center in Turin which starts in 2010 a two weeks training programme on social security for migrant workers.

7. Date and place of the next meeting

The Committee confirmed that the next meeting will take place on 2 July 2010 in Ankara.



Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms

SSCSSR(2010)5RSC1DRAFTPROG

5th MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

28 May 2010

Hotel Radika, Mavrovo

DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

Working language: English

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA

The meeting will be opened by the representative of the host country. Mr. Sixto MOLINA, the SSCSSR Programme Manager, DG III – Social Cohesion, will welcome the participants.

The Committee is invited to appoint the Chair of the meeting and adopt the draft agenda as set out in this document (according to Article 7 of the Terms of Reference).

ACTION: APPOINT THE CHAIR OF THE MEETING AND ADOPT THIS DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

II. STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat will inform the Committee of the most recent developments since the last meeting of the RSC.

(a) Report of the 4th meeting of the RSC

[SSCSSR(2009)4SC3FINREP]

The Committee has already approved the Report of its 4th meeting.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

(b) Reports on National Training Events

The Secretariat will inform the Committee about the national training events held by the Secretariat.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

(c) Reports on Regional Seminars on Pensions and Health Care

The Secretariat will inform the Committee about the two Regional Seminars on Health Care and on Pensions.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

(d) Reports on Speaking Days

The Secretariat will inform the Committee about the Speaking Days organised by the Secretariat.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

(e) Reports on the Third Regional Summer School

The Secretariat will inform the Committee about the Third Regional Summer School.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

III. CURRENT ACTIVITIES

(a) Preparation for the State Secretaries Meeting

The Secretariat will report to the Committee on the preparation process for the State Secretaries meeting.

ACTION: DISCUSS

(b) Legal Analysis and Sets of Studies

The Secretariat will update the Committee members regarding the state of preparation of legal analysis and sets of studies as decided on the previous RSC meeting.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

IV. DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

[SSCSSR(2010)5RSC4DMD]

The Secretariat will present the Draft Declaration of the Ministerial Conference which will take place on 12 October 2010. The draft should be agreed upon by the Regional Steering Committee and the State Secretaries meeting in order to be put on the Ministerial Conference's agenda.

ACTION: DISCUSS AND AGREE UPON THE DRAFT

V. ORGANISATION OF COMING EVENTS

The Secretariat will inform the Steering Committee about the organisation of activities in the period until November 2010.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

VII. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

As already decided by the Committee, the next 6th RSC meeting will take place in July 2010 in Ankara after the State Secretaries meeting.

ACTION: CONFIRM THE DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT RSC MEETING



Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms

SSCSSR(2010)5RSC2DRLOP

5th MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

28 May 2010

Hotel Radika, Mavrovo

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Working language: English

ALBANIA

Ms Diana BEQIRI

Head of Pension Sector

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Dr Šerifa GODINJAK

Head of the Unit for European Integration and International Co-operation

Department for Health

Ministry of Civil Affairs

CROATIA

Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ

Head of the Department for Bilateral Cooperation in the Area of Social Security

Directorate for Pension and Invalidity Insurance

Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship

MONTENEGRO

Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ

Senior Adviser

Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare

SERBIA

Mr Nenad RAKIĆ

Advisor

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

“THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA”

Ms Irena RISTESKA

Head of Pension and Disability Insurance Unit

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

TURKEY

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN

Expert

General Directorate of External Relations and Services for Workers Abroad

Ministry of Labour and Social Security

KOSOVO¹

Mr. Muhamet GJOCAJ

Director of Social Welfare Department
Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

Mr Mentor MORINA

Head of Budgetary Analyses and Poverty Evaluation
Department of Social Welfare
Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Mr Kenichi HIROSE

Senior Social Security Specialist

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EXPERTS

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Prof. Dr. Paul SCHOUKENS

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SECRETARIAT

Council of Europe – DG III Social Cohesion

Mr Sixto MOLINA

Co-ordinator of Co-operation and Technical Assistance Programmes

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