

Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms

SSCSSR(2009)4SC3FINREP

4th MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

10 December 2009

The City Hotel, Podgorica
Montenegro

MEETING REPORT

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

Mr. Veselin VUKČEVIĆ opened the meeting with his welcoming speech. He stressed the importance of the SSCSSR Programme in the development of institutional capacities and legal and administrative reforms in Montenegro with a view to achieving complete compliance with EU standards. He also wished the Committee members a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Montenegro.

According to Article 7 of its Terms of Reference, the Committee appointed Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ to chair the meeting.

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

Ms Verena TAYLOR welcomed the participants on behalf of the Council of Europe. She also presented an overview of the recent developments in the organisation, in particular referring to the increasing cooperation with the European Union and the process of developing an Action Plan for Social Security by the CDCS.

2. Communication from the EC

Ms Agota KOVACS expressed her satisfaction in respect of the existing communication between the EC and CoE with regard to this Programme. She indicated that the programme is well implemented and that the results of the monitoring report were highly satisfactory.

She informed the Committee on the latest developments within the European Commission, in particular regarding the merge of Enlargement and New Neighbourhood policies, as well as the set up of an External Service. With regard to the South-East Europe, she mentioned the opening of negotiations with “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” and visa liberalisation for three Beneficiary Parties (Serbia, Montenegro and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”).

3. Statement by the Secretariat

(a) Report of the 3rd meeting of the RSC

The Draft Report of the 3rd meeting of the Committee has been adopted by written procedure. Hence the Committee confirmed its decision.

(b) Reports on visibility meetings held by the Secretariat

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee that all Beneficiary Parties to the Programme have been visited in order to hold visibility meetings with the authorities. This type of cooperation is highly appreciated by the Secretariat and considered to be very important. Information obtained at the visibility meetings has been used in adjusting activities to the needs of the Beneficiary Parties. Another set of visibility meetings will be organised between the summer and the end of the Programme.

(c) High Level Meeting on Social Security Coordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ms Verena TAYLOR informed the Committee about the High Level Meeting on Social Security Coordination organised on 19 June 2009 in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Outcomes of the meeting were promising, however, did not lead to immediate changes in the situation.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK expressed her gratitude to the Secretariat for organising the meeting in Sarajevo. Despite the lack of immediate results, the feedback from the participants was very positive. Efforts must be continued with regard to this priority issue. She proposed to have an expert look at the current legislation which prevents the system from being more harmonised with regard to social security coordination.

(c) Speaking Days

Ms Tanja KALOVSKA informed the Committee about the Speaking Days between Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina which took place on 9 December in Podgorica (Montenegro). The meeting was very constructive with regard to identifying obstacles to coordination of social security schemes caused by the current bilateral agreement between the two Beneficiary Parties. Participants expressed the need for concluding a new bilateral agreement. They also requested the Secretariat to organise another set of Closed Speaking Days aiming at defining the main principles of this new agreement.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK confirmed that both delegations had positive feedback. The main result was identifying priority actions to be taken in the future. She also stressed the need for support by the Programme to work under the current agreement before a new one is concluded.

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee that with regard to the other Speaking Days, issues are slowly but progressively being solved in the region. The number of individual complaints has dropped significantly since the beginning of the Programme. Two sets of Speaking Days initially planned in the Action Plan have been cancelled for that reason which shows the progress made by Liaison Bodies responsible for the implementation of Bilateral Agreements.

4. Future Activities

(a) Preparation for the Third Regional Summer School

Mr Sixto MOLINA reminded the Committee about the discussion with regard to the venue of the next Summer School. The main concern of the Secretariat is to provide Beneficiary Parties with equal opportunities with regard to their participation to this important annual training event.

Mr Nenad RAKIĆ proposed to organise the Third Summer School in Serbia.

Mr Mentor MORINA invited the Committee to examine the possibility for students from Kosovo¹ with regard to their participation in the Summer School if organised in Serbia.

Ms Agota KOVACS stressed the importance of assuring the right for all delegation to participate in the event. The case need to be, this right may overrule the principle of regional balance.

Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ invited the Summer School to be organised in Croatia, while Ms Irena RISTESKA extended the invitation to “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

The Committee discussed the possibilities for all delegations to travel within the region and decided that the Secretariat will decide upon the place of the Third Regional Summer School based on this discussion and information obtained from Beneficiary Parties. The dates of the Summer School are 16-29 May 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.

(b) Legal Analysis, Sets of Studies and Copatibility Studies

Mr Sixto MOLINA presented the proposals received so far by the Secretariat and invited the Committee to come up with proposals in order to finalise the list of topics. He reminded the Committee that Legal Analysis are to be organised in each Beneficiary Party according to their requests. Sets of Studies are to be organised on a regional level and there are two topics to be selected by the Committee. Compatibility Studies are organised by the Secretariat as part of the process of Seminars on Health Care and Pensions.

1. With regard to **Legal Analysis**, the following requests were made:

Ms Diana BEQIRI confirmed the request of Albanian authorities previously conveyed to the Secretariat by e-mail on organising a study and evaluation of the Albanian legislation of social security and to compare them with the standards of the European Code of Social Security and also with the EU regulation 1408/71.

Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ confirmed the request of Croatian authorities previously conveyed to the Secretariat by email to analyse the legislation in Croatia which regulates working status of migrant workers and exercising rights which derive from the working status (their social rights).

Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ proposed to analyse the protection of employees at workplace (Safety at work) in Montenegro.

Mr Mentor MORINA proposed to analyse the pension legislation in a view of preparing bilateral agreements in Kosovo.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN confirmed the request of Turkish authorities previously conveyed to the Secretariat by e-mail on dealing with the issue of “Adverse Impact of Global Financial Crisis on Employment and Social Security”

The Secretariat has decided to discuss the topic of the legal analysis in Turkey on bilateral basis.

The Secretariat also invited other Beneficiary Parties to communicate their proposals with regard to legal analysis by email not later than the end of December 2009.

2. Regarding the two Sets of Studies to be carried out, unveiling the fact that Albania, Croatia and Turkey had so far communicated their proposals, the Secretariat proposed to discuss these three proposals in order to select two topics to be examined.

After voting on the proposals received by e-mail prior to the Meeting and those additional proposals made by delegates during the Meeting, the following topics have been selected:

- Impact of seasonal labour migration on social security
- Pension insurance (disability)

(c) Preparation for the State Secretaries meeting and the Ministerial Conference

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee about the preparations for the two high level events to be organised by the Programme. He informed the Committee that due to elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it might not be possible to organise the Ministerial Conference in Sarajevo, as it was planned before. He also informed about the dates proposed for these two meetings: 17 June 2010 for the State Secretaries meeting and 12 October 2010 for the Ministerial Conference.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN reminded the Committee about the ILO Conference taking place during the first three weeks in June hence making it difficult for delegations to take part in the State Secretaries meeting. He also proposed to organise the Ministerial Conference instead of the State Secretaries meeting in Turkey taking into account the impossibility for Bosnia and Herzegovina to host the Ministerial Conference.

After consulting with the calendar of ILO, the Committee decided to fix the dates for the State Secretaries meeting on 24 June 2010. The date of the Ministerial Conference remains unchanged.

Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ proposed to organise the Ministerial Conference in Montenegro taking into account the impossibility for Bosnia and Herzegovina to host that event.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK supported the proposal by Montenegro regarding the organisation of the Ministerial Conference.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN proposed the Committee to vote with regard to the decision of the place of the Ministerial Conference.

The Secretariat requested the Beneficiary parties to take the floor to indicate, on a preliminary basis, to which of the two proposals they could give their support.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK, Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ, Ms Diana BEQIRI, Mr Mentor MORINA, Ms Irena RISTESKA and Mr Nenad RAKIĆ supported the proposal by Montenegro regarding the organisation of the Ministerial Conference.

Taking into account that, apart from Montenegro, six other Delegations supported the proposal to organise the Ministerial Conference in Montenegro, the Secretariat has decided not to vote on this issue given the clear position of the majority of the delegates.

The decision has been made to organise the Ministerial Conference in Montenegro. The previous decision of organising the State Secretaries meeting in Turkey remains unchanged.

(d) Regional Meetings of the Funds

Mr Alexander KOSTANYAN informed the Committee about the proposal of replacing Speaking Days by Regional meetings of Funds responsible for Health Care and Pensions. The proposal is based on the significant decrease of personal application for Speaking Days as discussed before. A "Regional Funds meeting" was proposed to the Secretariat by several Beneficiary Parties at visibility meetings earlier in 2009. Hence the Secretariat proposed to adjust the Action Plan by changing some speaking days by Regional meetings on Pensions and Health Care.

Ms Irena RISTESKA supported the proposal by the Secretariat and informed the Committee of the proposal by the Macedonian Health Fund to organise such an event in Macedonia jointly with the Programme.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK supported the proposal by the Secretariat and also the Macedonian proposal with regard to the joint forum.

Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ also supported the proposal and expressed the need of representatives from the respective ministries to be also invited.

Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ supported the proposal by the Secretariat.

Mr. Halûk ŞAHİN supported the proposals made by the Secretariat as well as the Macedonian Representative.

The Committee decided to replace the remaining Speaking Days in the Action Plan by Regional Meeting of Funds responsible for Public Health Care jointly with the Macedonian Health Insurance Fund.

(e) National Training Events

Mr Sixto MOLINA presented the proposals received so far by the Secretariat and invited the Committee to come up with proposals in order to finalise the list of topics. He reminded the Committee that National Training Events are to be organised in each Beneficiary Party according to their requests.

With regard to the National Training Events, the following requests were made:

Ms Diana BEQIRI confirmed the request of Albanian authorities previously conveyed to the Secretariat by e-mail to organise a National Training Event on “Capacity raising and institutional development for the realisation of the negotiation process on bilateral agreement in the area of social protection” in Albania.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK proposed to organise a Workshop on application of Regulations 1408 and 883 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ confirmed the request of Croatian authorities previously conveyed to the Secretariat by e-mail to organise a training on EU Social Security Coordination with particular attention to Regulations 1408 and 883 in Croatia.

Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ proposed a National Training Event on Chapter 2 and Chapter 19 in Montenegro.

Mr Nenad RAKIĆ will inform the Secretariat about the choice made by Serbian authorities in the first part of January 2010.

Ms Irena RISTESKA proposed two topics: “Coordination and implementation of Regulations 1408 and 883” and “Social security coverage of self-employed and farmers”. She will inform the Secretariat about the choice made by Macedonian authorities.

Mr. Halûk ŞAHİN confirmed the request of Turkish authorities previously conveyed to the Secretariat by e-mail to organise a National Training Event on “Supplementary (Occupational) Social Security Schemes” in Turkey. He explained the grounds that lie behind the proposal and stressed that other Beneficiary Parties may also benefit the event.

Mr Mentor MORINA requested to organise a National Training Event on how to prepare Bilateral Agreements in Kosovo.

Mr. Sixto MOLINA explained that participants from one Beneficiary Party are welcome to attend a National Training Event organised in another Beneficiary Party, but only at their own expense and hence SSCSSR Programme budget would not cover such participation.

5. Training Activities

(a) Council of Europe Training on Social Security Coordination

Mr Sixto MOLINA informed the Committee about the annual training event organised by the Council of Europe in Zagreb in September 2009.

(b) Second Regional Seminar on Health Care

Mr Alexander KOSTANYAN informed the Committee outcomes of the Regional Seminar on Health Care which was held in Skopje in November 2009.

(c) Study Visit on Social Security Coordination

Mr Alexander KOSTANYAN informed the Committee about the Study Visit on Social Security organised by the Secretariat to Strasbourg, Brussels and Leuven in October 2009.

Mr Halûk ŞAHİN informed the Committee about the positive feedback received from participants to the Study Visit.

6. Date of the next meeting

The Committee requested the Secretariat to communicate the date of the next Committee meeting once the venue of the Third Summer School has been selected.



Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms

SSCSSR(2009)4RSC1PROG

4th MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

10 December 2009

The City Hotel, Podgorica
Montenegro

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 Montenegrin authorities. Ms. Verena TAYLOR, Head of the Social Policy Department, DG III – Social Cohesion will welcome the participants and introduce the meeting.

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. COMMUNICATION FROM THE EC

By Mrs. Agota KOVACZ, Programme Manager, DG Enlargement, European Commission.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

III. 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 3rd meeting of the RSC

[SSCSSR(2009)3SC3FINREP]

The Committee has already approved the Report of its 3rd meeting.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

(b) Reports on visibility meetings held by the Secretariat

The Secretariat will inform the Committee about the visibility meetings held by the Secretariat.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

(c) High Level Meeting on Social Security Coordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Secretariat will inform the Committee about the national event organised in Sarajevo in June 2009. The Committee is invited to comment on this matter.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE / COMMENT

(d) Speaking Days

1) IMPLEMENTED

- BETWEEN MONTENEGRO AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN DECEMBER 2009 (CLOSED SPEAKING DAYS)

2) CANCELLED

- BETWEEN SERBIA AND "THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA" IN OCTOBER 2009

- BETWEEN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND SERBIA IN NOVEMBER 2009

The Committee will be informed about the state of implementation of the Speaking Days.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

IV. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

(a) Preparation for the Third Regional Summer School

The Secretariat will report to the Committee on the preparation process for the Third Regional Summer School on social security coordination.

ACTION: DISCUSS

(b) Legal Analysis, Set of Studies, Compatibility Studies

The Secretariat will ask the Committee members for their proposals regarding compatibility studies to be implemented by the Programme.

ACTION: MAKE PROPOSALS

(c) Preparation for the State Secretary meeting and Ministerial Conference

The Secretariat will report to the Committee on the preparation process for the two high level events.

ACTION: DISCUSS

(d) Regional meetings of the Funds

The Secretariat will propose to replace Speaking Days by Regional Meetings of the two funds responsible for health and pension insurance.

ACTION: DISCUSS AND MAKE DECISION

(e) National Training Events

The Secretariat will ask the Committee members for their proposals regarding national training events to be organised by the Programme.

ACTION: MAKE PROPOSALS

V. TRAINING ACTIVITIES

(a) Council of Europe Training on Social Security Coordination

The Secretariat will inform the Committee on the annual training event organised by the Council of Europe in September 2009 in Zagreb.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

(b) Health Care

*[SSCSSR(2009)1HC2FINPROG,
SSCSSR(2009)1HC5EV, Note for the Steering Committee]*

The Secretariat will present the outcomes of the Regional Seminar on Health Care that was held in Skopje in November 2009.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE/ DISCUSS/ DECIDE

(c) Study Visit

[SSCSSR(2009)ISV5EV, SSCSSR(2009)SV1PROG]

The Secretariat will inform the Committee about the Study Visit on Social Security Coordination organised by SSCSSR to Strasbourg and Brussels in.

ACTION: TAKE NOTE

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

VII. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

As already decided by the Committee, the next 5th RSC meeting will take place in June 2009 Skopje. The Committee is invited to discuss the exact date of this meeting.

**ACTION: DECIDE UPON THE DATE OF
THE 5TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE**



Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms

SSCSSR(2009)4RSC2LOP

4th MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

10th December 2009

Hotel City, Podgorica
Montenegro

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

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

Mr. Veselin VUKČEVIĆ

Senior Adviser

Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare

Ms Ana STIJEPOVIĆ

Senior Adviser

Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare

Ms Marija KLIKOVAC

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 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.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ms Agota KOVACS
Unit D3 Regional Programmes
Directorate General for Enlargement
European Commission

SECRETARIAT

Council of Europe – DG III Social Cohesion

Ms Verena TAYLOR
Head of the Social Policy Department
Directorate General of Social Cohesion
Council of Europe

Mr Sixto MOLINA
Co-ordinator of Co-operation and Technical Assistance Programmes
Central Division
Directorate General III - Social Cohesion

Mr Alexander KOSTANYAN
Regional Programme Co-ordinator
Social Security Coordination and Social Security Reforms
Regional Programme Office

Ms Tanja KALOVSKA
Programme Officer
Social Security Coordination and Social Security Reforms
Regional Programme Office

Ms Tatjana KOSTOVSKA
Programme Officer
Social Security Coordination and Social Security Reforms
Regional Programme Office

Mr. Andrej TERZIC
Council of Europe Office in Montenegro

Mr Ivica IVANOVIC
Local Programme Officer for Montenegro