



ASEM Workshop on “Social protection floor and the informal economy”

CONCEPT PAPER

Full name of the event: Workshop on “Social protection floor and the informal economy – what initiatives to ensure universal access to basic social protection: towards new balanced social protection systems, how does it support employment?”

Date: 27th and 28th September 2010

Location: France - Nice

Venue: tbc

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1. Introduction

In order to ensure concrete exchanges between experts and public officers from Asia and Europe, the final conclusions of the Second ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers Conference in October 2008 in Bali have designed specific project leaders: including France and Germany for the European side (para 10.c.i). In this framework France has assumed the "project leadership" in the work area of “Decent work, including social security for workers in particular in the informal sector”.

Thus, after the first conference held by Germany in Potsdam in March 2009, France will host a workshop with representatives from all ASEM member states to discuss the issue of integrating the informal economy to social protection floor.

In doing so we will build a subject related framework for the Third ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers Conference in 2010 (the Netherlands, Leiden, December 2010).

2. Main discussion topics

Facing the economic crisis and its consequences, analyzes on the role of social protection as an automatic stabilizer are now widely shared. Consequently, the extension of social protection coverage to all is more than ever on the agenda of international organizations. So far, innovative programs to extend social security coverage are already implemented in many emerging countries. In addition, the ILO Global Jobs Pact is articulating in an operational way job creation and social protection for all, particularly through the promotion of the Social Protection floor.

In this context, the issue of integration of the informal economy within the social protection system and the challenge of the access to social protection of workers and their families from the informal economy are subject to renewed analyses and innovative initiatives that may modify the balance within social protection systems.

The workshop on “Social Protection floor and the informal Economy” will focus on new approaches for the participation of the informal economy into social protection. It will also allow us to study the impact on employment of the new programs contributing to the Social Protection Floor and the extension of social protection coverage to population not protected. Our dialogue will also have to be seen in the context of current discussions in international organizations facing the economic crisis and its consequences. The discussions will be held in view of proposing recommendations for the 3rd ASEM LEMC and bringing support to promote the Global Social floor and cooperation on the field.

With this in mind a workshop between European and Asian countries on these issues should be an opportunity to present and share experiences on policies and programs that are beginning to be implemented in Asia. This workshop would also allow to open discussions on the evolution of social protection systems in the framework of the crisis and post-crisis context, both in Asia and Europe.

3. Structure of the meeting

The workshop on “Social protection floor and the informal Economy” will be a one-and-a-half day event, organised by the Delegation for European and International Affairs of the French Ministry for Labour in collaboration with the European Commission.

Participants will include: 1) Senior Officers from each ASEM Minister of Labour and Employment; 2) representatives from the European Commission; 3) experts and academics if appropriate for certain parts of the debate; 4) representatives of international organisations, particularly the ILO.

The workshop on “Social Protection floor and the informal Economy” will consist of an introductory session followed by three working sessions on specific topics illustrated by examples of practices and a concluding discussion.

The draft programme of the workshop on “Social Protection floor and the informal Economy” will be provided to ASEM partners in May 2010.

A pre-draft is enclosed as an annex.