



The Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for ports, meeting in Brussels on 12th December 2014 adopted the following statement:

In June 2013, ETF, IDC, FEPORT and ESPO¹ have established, with the support of the European Commission, the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for ports. Through this committee, social partners intend to work jointly to contribute to the improvement of working and living conditions for the people employed in the sector as well to the competitiveness and productivity within EU ports.

The EU-level social partners believe that the Committee should act in coordination and mutual support with social dialogue at national and port level, and in full respect of the specific laws, existing collective agreements and organizational models in place in the various EU ports. Many ports in the EU have specific organizational models as far as port operations and port labour are concerned. Over the last decades, these models have been developed and consolidated through laws or bargaining agreements at different levels, in a way so as to guarantee efficient operations and decent working conditions.

When adjustments are to be made to these models, they should be negotiated, where expected, by social partners, in accordance with existing and future relevant rules. At present, in several countries national social partners are engaged in negotiations over possible reforms or actualization of the port labour schemes. Due to the complex nature of the issues under discussion, these are lengthy processes that require a mutually agreed time frame. Such background should be taken into account by the institutional actors when taking decisions on initiatives on the sector.

In the current economic and social framework, it is crucial to keep social peace in EU ports: this can only be done via a continuous and open dialogue amongst social partners and, when appropriate, or expected, with the institutions. The role of the European institutions should primarily be to ensure that good conditions for dialogue prevail, and to assist social partners in reaching agreements on issues of competence which allow for the continuous advancement of the sector.

At European level, social partners are already discussing key issues such as training and qualifications, health and safety as well as gender equality. The social partners will look to expand discussions to innovation (both market based and technological) in the port sector so as to allow for European ports to remain competitive.

¹ ESPO in its capacity of representing Bulgarian Port Infrastructure Company, Cyprus Port Authority, Union des Ports de France, Transport Malta, NC Port Administration Constantza, Sveriges Hamnar, British Ports Association, UK Major Ports Group.

For all the above mentioned reasons, social partners invite the European Commission to refrain from new legislative proposals directly related to existing or new topics discussed in the framework of the ongoing European social dialogue.

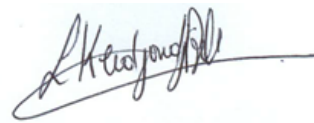
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