

Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms

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8th MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

05 April 2011

Dubrovnik, Croatia

DRAFT MEETING REPORT

The 8th Steering Committee (SC) meeting was organised on 5th April 2011 at the Dubrovnik Palace Hotel in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

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

At the opening of the meeting, Mr Sixto MOLINA, SSCSSR Programme Manager, welcomed the participants and wished the Committee members a successful meeting. According to the rotating principle of chairmanship at the Steering committee meetings, Mr Mentor MORINA, representative of Kosovo* to the Steering Committee of the SSCSSR should have been elected as a chairperson. Mr MORINA, however, indicated that, according to Article 7 of the Terms of Reference of the Committee, it was up to Kosovo* to chair the meeting. Noting that he was the Deputy to the Steering Committee member, he said that he would prefer not to chair the meeting and asked the Committee to agree to have the SC member of Kosovo to chair the next meeting of the Committee. He proposed the candidature of Ms Diana BEQIRI (following the Beneficiary Parties' alphabetical order) who, on her turn, proposed the candidature of Ms Snježana BALOKOVIĆ as the representative of the host country.

The Committee appointed Ms BALOKOVIĆ as the Chair of the meeting and adopted the draft agenda of the meeting.

Ms BALOKOVIĆ welcomed the participants and wished the Committee members a successful work and a pleasant stay in Dubrovnik.

2. Statement by the Secretariat

a) Report of the 7th meeting of the Regional Steering Committee

Mr MOLINA informed the Committee that the amendments proposed by the Turkish Representative of the Committee Mr. Halûk ŞAHİN were included in the draft meeting report. He indicated that some amendments were mainly of grammatical nature while others concerned the merits. He requested the Committee to examine the amendments.

All the changes proposed by Mr. ŞAHİN were accepted. Mr. Darko DOČINSKI, Deputy Steering Committee Member in respect of "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", proposed to include the following formulation after the amendment of Mr. ŞAHİN on the page 5 of the Report: "The Secretariat informed that although movement between budgetary lines are not always accepted, the Secretariat will contact the Commission to inquire about possible reallocation of funds".

Mr Nenad RAKIĆ, representative of Serbia to the Steering Committee, asked to add a footnote after the first use of the term "Kosovo" in point "g" of the Report.

The Report of the 8th Meeting of the Steering Committee was adopted.

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Activity Reporting

The Secretariat reported on activities organised after the last meeting of the Steering Committee and on the evaluation of those events.

b) Evaluation report on the Regional Training on Informatization and Normalisation of Social Security Databases in South East Europe in Belgrade, Serbia

Mr MOLINA informed the Committee about the Regional Training on Informatization and Normalisation of Social Security Databases in South East Europe held in Belgrade on 8-9 February 2011 and confirmed that according to the information contained in the evaluation forms received, participants were mostly very satisfied with the organisation of the meeting and with the subjects covered. The Secretariat suggested that the Beneficiary Parties would discuss with the European Commission (EC) about possible additional assistance for developing national electronic database systems as the follow up of this particular activity at the national level.

Ms BALOKOVIĆ informed about developments in regulating the social security database at national level through the development of a single access point, which will be the Central Registry of Affiliates (REGOS) in the Republic of Croatia. She proposed that a meeting with the representatives of the EC Technical Committee would be organised during the study tour in May in order to discuss this issue. Other Beneficiary Parties supported the idea to meet with the EC representatives to discuss this particular issue during the study tour.

Mr DOČINSKI informed about the newly drafted project fiche on the co-ordination of Social Security and the organisation of the Employment Service Agency.

Financial aspects connected to the development of national social security database systems were also discussed.

c) Evaluation report on the Regional Meeting on Capacity Raising and Institutional Development in the Negotiation Process on the Adoption of Bilateral Agreements

The Secretariat reported on the assessment of the event organised in Zagreb on 16-17 February 2011 and stressed that there might be a need for additional bilateral agreements to be concluded to fully cover social security rights of migrant workers in the Region. It was noted that the implementation of bilateral agreements is related to practical (coordination between administrations) and financial problems thus it should be further discussed at national level since no further follow-up activity was envisaged to be organised within this Programme.

d) Evaluation report on the Regional Training on Reforms of the Pension Systems in the Region

Mr MOLINA briefed the Committee about the Regional Training on Reforms of the Pension Systems in the Region organised in Ankara, Turkey, on 8-9 March 2011.

He noted that the theme of the meeting was topical and of current interest for the Beneficiary Parties to the Programme. He also reported on certain technical and organisational problems encountered due to unforeseen weather conditions and to removal of meeting papers by the personnel of the hotel. All the supporting materials were sent again to the participants after the event.

e) Follow-up to the Third Ministerial Conference in Budva

The Secretariat discussed with the Steering Committee Members the follow-up of the Third Ministerial Conference on Social Security Co-ordination and Social Security Reforms in South East Europe organised in Budva, Montenegro, on 12 October 2010 and the decisions adopted by the Committee at its 7th Meeting in Istanbul on 25 January 2011.

Financial, technical, and organisational questions connected to the publication of the Ministerial Declaration were discussed. The Secretariat reported that the translation of Kosovo* was missing in order to compile the file for publication. Mr Mentor MORINA informed that the Albanian translation could be used as an official translation in respect of Kosovo.

Dr. Šerifa GODINJAK proposed to include the two Ministerial Declarations of Zagreb and Tirana as reference documents in the publication, as well as references to the EU and the Council of Europe regulations and conventions. Mr ŞAHİN stressed the importance of a preface to make an introduction to the text of the Ministerial Declaration. Mr. Molina indicated that the Steering Committee should agree on the text of the preface to be drafted in English being the official language of the Programme. He also indicated that the Secretariat was not envisaging to include in the publication the translated versions of the preface.

The Committee focused on the reporting process, to be followed as agreed in the Budva Ministerial Declaration, once the Joint Programme is formally completed in August 2011. In this context, Mr MOLINA suggested that the Beneficiary Parties would send their reports to the Director General of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe who would then decide which unit would examine the issue in the future.

Mr DOČINSKI informed about the decision of his Ministry to prepare annual intermediate reports in order to facilitate the preparation of the final report by 2014. Ms GODINJAK added that it is also the responsibility of the Beneficiary Parties to develop internal reporting mechanisms.

f) Legal Analyses

Mr. MOLINA informed the Committee that the expert/consultant to draft the Serbian legal analysis was identified. He indicated that the possibility of having the legal analysis translated was being examined and added that Bosnian, Croatian as well as Turkish versions of the respective legal analysis reports had already been displayed in the official website of the SSCSSR Programme.

Ms. GODINJAK informed about the Comparative Analysis of Health Insurance that has been distributed to the parties concerned for possible comments.

g) Translation of meetings

The Secretariat informed the Steering Committee about financial implications for translation purposes and discussed with the Committee the possibilities of distribution of the remaining budget for translation of the events to be organised before the end of the

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Programme. Having in mind the limits of the budget line for translation, the Secretariat proposed that the translation would be provided on national language of the host country only. Mr. ŞAHİN referred the role of the translation into the national languages of all Beneficiary Parties in important events that will be held in Budva and Sarajevo and asked the Secretariat to endeavour to ensure the translation service. Mr. MOLINA responded unveiling that it might be possible, on condition that the facilities of the venue would be sufficient for that service, to cover the travel and accommodation costs of the translators who will be assigned by the Beneficiary Parties and added, following the request of Mr. ŞAHİN, that the interested Parties would be informed of this opportunity.

h) Publications

Mr. MOLINA informed the Committee members about the new transversal website presently being discussed in the Council of Europe. Mr. ŞAHİN asked the Secretariat to ensure that the website of the Programme would be available after the end of the Programme.

Mr. Sixto MOLINA assured the Committee members that the website of the Programme would be updated and would not be removed from the Council of Europe web. Ms. BALOKOVIĆ required whether it would be possible to connect the website of the Programme with the websites of relevant Ministries. The Secretariat proposed to create links between the Programme website and the webpages of the Ministries concerned.

3. Organisation of upcoming events

The Secretariat informed the Committee that all activities programmed before the end of the Programme have been confirmed. The Committee agreed that the event on Health Insurance would be postponed to early July due to the fact that experts/speakers were not available before that month.

The Secretariat informed on practical and organisational details of the programme of the study tour for civil servants from Balkan region and Turkey to be organised on 15-22 May. Ms. GODINJAK asked the Secretariat to draft a detailed letter addressed to her authorities including the requirements needed to participate in this event.

The potential translation issues of the 3 forthcoming events (Coordination of Disability Pension Schemes in Budva on 6-7 June, Regional meeting on transfer of know-how in EC accession negotiations in Podgorica on 21-22 June, and the Event on regional insurance Cards and health care in Sarajevo on 6-7 July), the venues of remaining events, the number of participants and financial considerations were also discussed.

4. Any other business

Mr MOLINA informed the Committee about the administrative procedures and reporting formalities to be followed prior to the termination of the Programme.

5. Date and place of the next meeting

The Committee decided to meet in July for the last meeting of the Steering Committee to examine the overall impact of the Programme. The exact date and the venue of the meeting will be decided taking into account practical, financial and organisational requirements.