



Trade union response to the EC Communication on ‘Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation’ COM (2012) 446 final

The Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN), bringing together national trade union confederations from South and North, Solidarity Support Organisations and Global Unions as well representation from International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) regional organisations, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), took note of the above mentioned Communication:

1. We welcome the Commission’s Communication framing sustainable approaches on social protection in development, setting objectives of equal and universal access to social protection (extension of coverage to informal workers) and supporting the creation of fiscal space in partner countries ;
2. We welcome the support of the Communication to SPFs, including the reference to the ILO standards such as the ILO Recommendation 202, aiming at moving from safety nets to more comprehensive systems of protection schemes in line with the Decent Work Agenda;
3. We support the inclusion of decent work and social protection as fundamental objectives for the sustainable development agenda linked to the post-2015 MDGs and follow up of Rio+20 processes;
4. We positively welcome the reference to social partners, which should be prioritized through their involvement in planning, implementing and monitoring social protection policies and mechanisms at country level supporting national democratic ownership;
5. We strongly remind the importance of supporting social dialogue as a priority in EU development cooperation. Therefore we call for consultative mechanisms, including EU and international social partners, which could provide direct support to the European Commission in policy design and implementation;
6. We are concerned of the fact that the Communication makes reference to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) when referring to the support of private sector in developing countries in managing protection schemes. There should be no role for ‘for profit’ corporations being there already many examples of failing private schemes. Moreover, the reference to CSR should be replaced by the full commitment to international labour standards and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
7. Finally we reiterate the importance of support for the involvement of social partners in policy dialogue at national level. Capacity building and technical assistance are crucial in this respect. Therefore we call on the European Council to ensure adequate funding for development cooperation in the forthcoming Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2014-2020, and within that adequate financial support for the DCI’s thematic program ‘Global Challenges’.