

FLASH REPORT

Event name

Sector Committees (SCs) in Moldova: opportunities, challenges and inputs for a roadmap for further development.

Main objective/s of the event

- Identify priority tasks and responsibilities of SC; defining the role and organization of the Technical secretariat of the SC
- Agree on the next steps and timeframe.

Background

The legislation in force (Law 244 adopted in November 2017) entrusts the Sector Committees with a significant scope of tasks and responsibilities. All players agree that the performance of SCs and their collaboration with employers and companies, as well as with ministries (Labour, Education, sector ministries and others) will have to be further reinforced. In this context, since 2016 ETF has been working with SCs in building capacities. In parallel, in 2019 ETF conducted an assessment of the functioning of Sector Committees.

Short introduction/description of the event

Over 30 participants took part to the event organised in Chisinau with the participation of representatives of all SC, of social partners and of relevant ministries (Education and Labour), to discuss and agree on priority tasks for SC and a roadmap supporting further development of the functioning of Sector Committees. Three experts of the new EU Twinning project that will support the NQF and Quality Assurance have participated, to learn more on the important challenges and the type of interactions among different stakeholders. Positive feedback on the relevance of the discussed themes and issues.

KEY OUTCOMES / CONCLUSIONS

The sessions and debates were very active and time was tight to complete the agenda points.

- ✓ Ministry of Labour welcomed the workshop, and gave an overview of last developments and pending challenges. 6 SC are now registered. But weaknesses persist in the involvement of companies in the SC's work.
- ✓ EU Delegation participated in the opening session and underlined that despite years of support, SC are not yet prepared to deliver. Their focus should be on development of occupational standards that can be used in qualifications / curriculum education and training.
- ✓ ETF contextualised the role of SCs in the ecosystem of skills and employment and underlined that a new phase and role has started in Nov 2017 with the adoption of the Law 244 on SC.
- ✓ Four SC (agriculture, construction, light industry and financial services) presented their main activities and achievements. Agriculture SC underlined differences in the experience of the SCs and invited all to reflect in terms of "ecosystem" - SCs need to see the wider picture. All 4 SCs acknowledged the importance of involving large and medium enterprises and communicating about VET for productivity. All SCs voiced concerns on the level and sustainability of financing of occupational standards development.
- ✓ Ministry of Education Culture and Research presented the set of planned actions in which SCs have a role and where more interaction is needed. Underscored that time is pressing - new qualifications have to be developed and alternative solutions are in preparation. Discussed the main challenges, and ways to solve them. All SCs agreed that this was a very powerful presentation, and welcomed this improvement in communication.

- ✓ The discussion on prioritisation of the SC tasks, out of the 16 listed in the Law 244, was done in interactive manner in smaller working groups. This part of the workshop was merged with the discussion on key inputs for a roadmap for SCs development. A few key conclusions on the proposed priority tasks:
 - With some variations, most SCs proposed some tasks related with the clusters: 1 “SCs as platforms for dialogue and LLL policy” (1, 2, 3); Cluster 2 “SC in occupational classification and standards (4, 13); Cluster 4 “SC in IVET and CVET programmes, curricula and assessment”; and Cluster 5 “SC in LM intelligence”.
 - Ministries had a different opinion on the focal tasks of SCs, and opted for task 9 (promote participation of employers and employees in VET and LLL) as a top priority; task 5 (initiate, coordinate and participate in developing and reviewing occupational standards); task 7 (participate in the NQF).
 - International experts (Twinning project) suggested focus on task 9 – dialogue with employers and their involvement.
- ✓ The various inputs for the roadmap included steps related with:
 - Improvements, harmonisation of the legal base; removal of certain barriers to work of the SCs
 - Finding a sustainable approach for financing of occupational standards
 - Improve communication and exchanges of information on planned activities involving SC
 - Strengthen capacity of SC, better planning of their activities, clarify membership and roles in the SCs. Sharing of good practise learned from study visits and workshops among all SCs and ministries.
 - Prepare for a “Technical Secretariat” with coordinating and support tasks. Agreed that the TS would work on a joint roadmap with all SCs, based on dialogue, and communicate also with the ministries. ETF is ready to support the activities of this TS for a first period (2019-2020).
- ✓ Other issues have been signalled related with possible reform of the chain “occupational standards-qualifications”, and the direction of travel could be of simplification of the occupational standard, and merging: “occupational profile + qualification standard + assessment standard”. ETF recommended that the 2 ministries and SCs discuss openly and in-depth the dimensions, implications and scenarios of this new perspective. It was clarified that this approach is only a early stage of debate and for the time being the established chain “occupational standard-qualification” will be maintained / followed.
- ✓ All sides agreed that the workshop and open discussion contributed to restore mutual trust, and all expect that follow-up steps will consolidate the positive outlook for solutions. Nonetheless the issues on the financing of new occupational standards and the actual contribution of SCs to develop new qualifications are interdependent and cannot be solved in isolation. This is why the TS should support further well-planned dialogue and support proposal elaborated jointly with all SCs.

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