

”Bucharest Process”

CONCLUSIONS

**OF THE 3rd MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY
IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE**

(“Montenegro Conclusions”)

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for employment, labour market and social policies of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo on behalf of Kosovo in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, and the representatives of the European and international social partners, meeting under the auspices of the Initiative for Social Cohesion of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe,

Recalling the Bucharest Declaration adopted by the First Ministerial Conference on employment in South Eastern Europe on 31 October 2003, giving effect to an initiative of the Belgian Government, the Conclusions of the Second Ministerial Conference that took place in Sofia on 27 October 2005, and the “Istanbul Declaration on Integrated and Coherent Employment Strategies in the Face of Globalization” of 12 September 2006,

Recalling the decent work paradigm and the Global Employment Agenda of the ILO, the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union, the European Social Agenda and the Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe, as well as the conclusions of recent regional events on employment, including the Seventh European Regional Meeting of the ILO,

Acknowledging the commitment to the “Bucharest Process” of all participating countries and territories and support of the international organizations, especially of the Initiative for Social Cohesion of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, as well as the important contribution of the Governments of Belgium, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Romania,

Acknowledging the recent EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania, the European accession perspective of the Western Balkan countries and the place of Moldova in the European Neighbourhood Policy,

Welcoming the establishment of the Regional Cooperation Council, which will ensure that social cohesion issues are considered alongside economic development issues,

Recognizing that our countries and territories still face common challenges in the area of employment and social policy, namely:

- a) Employment levels remain persistently low;
- b) Lack of jobs and poor quality of employment are the primary causes of social exclusion, poverty and migration;
- c) Many of our countries are still confronting low labour-market participation and high unemployment rates, as well as high levels of underemployment, informal and precarious work;
- d) Decent and productive employment, as well as access to social protection, remain priority goals to be attained since they determine people's ability to fully participate in society;
- e) Gender inequalities in employment persist, especially with regard to labour force participation, job segregation and wages.
- f) Young people are particularly hit by unemployment, discouragement, informal employment and precariousness;
- g) The participation of social partners in crafting employment and social policies needs to be further increased;
- h) Good governance, partnership and capacity for effective policy delivery need to be attained in order to ensure policy coherence and further progress towards more employment-rich growth and social cohesion as key factors for sustained stabilisation.

Having met at the Third Ministerial Conference on Employment and Social Policy in South Eastern Europe hosted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare of the Republic of Montenegro,

Unanimously adopt this twenty-sixth day of October 2007 the following Conclusions:

Employment and Social Policy objectives

1. We recognise the need of an integrated approach building on mutually reinforcing economic, employment and social policies and the relevance of the ILO and EU decent-work agenda and its four pillars addressing full and productive employment, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue as well as the inclusion of the gender dimension. To this end we intend to combine legislation, social dialogue, policy reforms, and capacity-building of our institutions, public administration and agencies,
2. We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen the **governance of the labour market** and social protection/welfare systems and to advance the reform of labour administration - including in the areas of vocational education and training, employment services and labour inspection, as well as in the area of social welfare - in full acknowledgement of

the essential role played by labour market and social welfare institutions in achieving employment and social policy objectives and in promoting sound industrial relations;

3. We resolve to improve our countries' employment and labour market policies, including through efficient **activation strategies** and the **review of benefit systems** to ensure that they are supportive to job search and activation and allow a better management of labour market transitions.
4. We are committed to promoting **inclusive labour markets and social cohesion** and determined to implement our employment and social policies so that they ensure equal opportunities for all, and to effectively address and improve employment participation of all disadvantaged and vulnerable groups or workers who are discriminated against, including those with disabilities, ethnic minorities and the Roma.
5. We are aware that human capital is fundamental to improving access to employment, enhancing productivity and quality at work as well as ensuring cohesive societies and are committed to effective **human resource development**.
6. We are determined to **promote gender equality** and mainstream gender in employment and social policies, including through the enforcement of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value and through measures combining work with family responsibilities.
7. We confirm our commitment to develop and implement **strategies that give young people a real and equal opportunity to find decent work**. In this respect, we are determined to mainstream youth employment into national development strategies and agendas as well as to develop policies and programmes for improving employment prospects of young people, including measures targeting disadvantaged youth.
8. We reaffirm our recognition that decent work includes safe work. We therefore resolve to further pursue the work undertaken in the context of the "Bucharest Process" in the area of **occupational safety and health (OSH)**, with a view to enhancing the potential benefits of protection as an important element in the quality of work and employment and improved productivity. To this end, we will strive to implement the national action plans and strategies on OSH, developed in a spirit of social dialogue, in order to strengthen and develop the capacity of labour administration and the social partners to help implement modern OSH systems.

9. We are determined to review and modernise our **social protection systems** including pensions and healthcare so that they can ensure social adequacy whilst being supportive to higher participation and retention into work.
10. We recognize the **key role that employers' and workers' organizations** can play in employment and social policies and we commit to enhanced, meaningful and constructive dialogue with social partners to shape employment and social policies with the aim of attaining the objective of full and productive employment as well as ensuring that the needs of both employers and workers are equally addressed. We confirm our willingness to further build and strengthen mechanisms for cooperation with the social partners at all levels.

Regional cooperation

1. We are convinced that regional cooperation can offer particular advantages in the promotion of employment and social cohesion in South Eastern Europe and contribute to supporting the EU accession perspective of the Balkan region as well as strengthening neighbourhood relations in the wider region. We commit ourselves to further **regional cooperation on employment policy** following an integrated approach that places decent work at the heart of economic, employment and social policies, in line with and the ILO agenda.
2. The review of the employment policies of our countries undertaken within the "Bucharest Process" offers a blueprint for the development of a comprehensive long-term approach to policy and institutional reforms. Hence, we hereby pledge to pursue the policy priorities stated in the "Sofia Conclusions", and to implement the recommendations of the Country Reviews of Employment Policy;
3. We acknowledge that cooperation and mutual learning under the Bucharest Process have contributed to national ownership, which will be the guiding principle to our further regional cooperation in the areas of employment and social policies.
4. We trust the Regional Cooperation Council to fully integrate employment and social policies among its strategic priorities and work programme, as well as to support the future work on employment and social policies in our countries and in the region.

International support

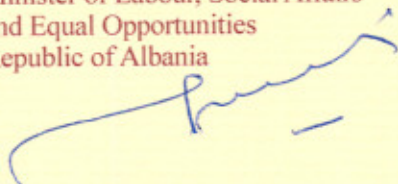
We reiterate our high appreciation of the support to the Bucharest Process provided so far by the governments of Belgium and Switzerland, and the international organizations: the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organization, the Initiative for Social Cohesion of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, as well as the European Trade Union Confederation and the International Organisation of Employers. We are convinced that international cooperation will continue to play an important role to help us achieving these goals in the new partnership spirit called for by the new regional cooperation process.

1. We call on the employers' and workers' organizations at regional, European and international levels to support their national counterparts in the strengthening of the technical capacity to actively participate in the design, monitoring and evaluation of national employment and social policies;
2. We ask for the European Commission's active role in the promotion of regional cooperation on employment and social policies in South Eastern Europe, through the Stabilisation and Association Process, all pre-accession frameworks and instruments, the Neighbourhood Policy and ongoing and future technical and financial assistance programmes to our region, notwithstanding the bilateral relations each of our individual countries have with the EU;
3. We call on the International Labour Organization to assist our countries in improving employment policies and strengthening labour market institutions, including the social partners, through the decent work country programmes, as well as to continue work on the promotion of regional cooperation on employment and social policies;
4. We seek further support from the Council of Europe for the promotion of the principles enshrined in the European Social Charter and the Revised Social Cohesion Strategy in the future cooperation on employment and social policy;
5. We call on other international and bilateral organisations to contribute to fostering policy coherence at national and regional levels, as well as to assist our countries in achieving the goals set out in these conclusions.

Done in Budva this day of 26 October 2007

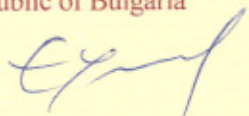
Mr Koço BARKA

Minister of Labour, Social Affairs
and Equal Opportunities
Republic of Albania




Ms Elka DIMITROVA

Director of Labour Market Policy
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Republic of Bulgaria




Mr Sergiu SAINCIUC

Deputy Minister of Economy and Trade
Republic of Moldova



Mr Vladimir ILIĆ

Secretary of State
Ministry of Economy and Regional
Development
Republic of Serbia

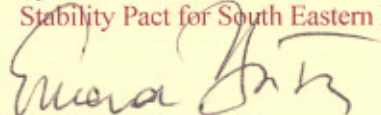


Mr Dusko MINOVSKI

State Secretary
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
"The former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia"


Mr Erhard BUSEK

Special Co-ordinator
Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe



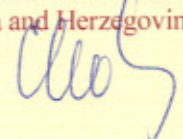
Mr Alexander VLADYCHENKO

Director General of Social Cohesion
Council of Europe




Mr Sredoje NOVIC

Minister of Civil Affairs
Bosnia and Herzegovina



Mr Ante VUČIĆ

Assistant Minister of Economy, Labour
and Entrepreneurship
Republic of Croatia




Mr Paul PĂCURARU

Minister of Labour, Family and Equal
Opportunities
Romania



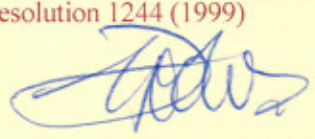
Mr Miodrag RADUNOVIĆ

Minister of Health, Labour and Social
Welfare
Republic of Montenegro



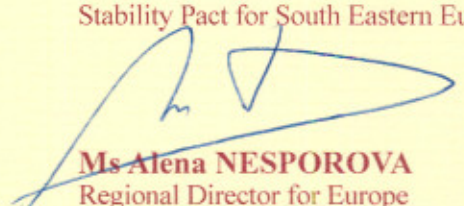
Mr Anton HOOKES

For the United Nations Interim
Administration Mission in Kosovo
(UMNIK), acting on behalf of the
Provisional Institutions of Self-
Government (PISG), within the terms
of United Nations Security Council
Resolution 1244 (1999)



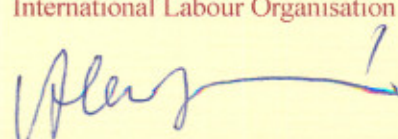
Mrs Miet SMET

Chair of the Initiative for Social Cohesion
Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe



Ms Alena NESPOROVA

Regional Director for Europe
and Central Asia
International Labour Organisation





Republic of Macedonia

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY

Hereby I declare that the Government of the Republic of Macedonia agrees with the Conclusions of the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Employment and social policy in South Eastern Europe, held in Budva , 25-26 of October 2007.

Therefore please consider that with this instrument the Republic of Macedonia becomes a signatory to the Conclusions of the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Employment and social policy in South Eastern Europe (Montenegro Conclusions).

However I declare that the Government of Republic of Macedonia does not accept the denomination used for my country in the above mentioned Conclusions, having in view that the constitutional name of my country is the Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Dusko Minovski
State Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long tail.