



NEWS

A KEY ROLE FOR EMPLOYERS IN THE BALKANS

Geneva, 13 March 2007 – In a region recovering from the effects of war, with enduring ethnic divisions, high levels of unemployment as well as having to face the challenges of transition from a communist regime – the role of employers in the Balkans, particularly through social dialogue, is central to ensuring economic development, poverty alleviation through employment and, as a result, social and political stability.

In a recent visit to Sarajevo in the context of an international conference on the Role of Business Associations for the Economic Development, organized by the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the IOE Secretary-General, Antonio Peñalosa, presented the essential role that the Bosnia and Herzegovina Employers' Organization can play in the reconstruction and development of the country.

A clear, united and independent voice for the business community will help the government to move ahead: in adjusting its present legal structure (labour code, tax law, trade law, property rights etc.) – essential for attracting foreign investment; and identifying the problems to be resolved and the needs to be met for a strong recovery and setting the foundations for a fruitful development.

Mr Peñalosa also highlighted the importance of setting up the Economic and Social Council, where Employers' Organizations together with Trade Unions would be able to provide effective and quick solutions to the numerous present concerns related to the world of work. The IOE and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), who are already working together in the region, decided to unite efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and try to convene a joint Conference on Social Dialogue before the end of the year.

The IOE is highly committed in its support for the Bosnian employers and Mr Peñalosa has agreed to increased collaboration within the IOE present Swiss and Belgian cooperation programmes in the region – in addition to the support already being provided to the Bosnia and Herzegovina employers by the Dutch Employers' Organization (VNO).

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