



IOE ADDED VALUE FOR THE EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN EUROPE

In a globalised world, events and issues outside the European Union have an increasing impact on European employers' organizations and their members. International norms and standards impact on companies - particularly multinational enterprises - through CSR initiatives, including codes of conduct and through supply chains. Companies need quick and reliable information on employment and labour - regulation and practices - in countries throughout the world.

I. REPRESENTING EMPLOYERS' INTERESTS IN GLOBAL POLICY MAKING

1. The IOE influences the standard setting processes within the ILO. These standards can have a direct impact on companies through ratification and implementation into national legislation. As recently proofed such impact can also include EU-policy and EU-legislation, as it was the case with the Ruffert case and the issue of public procurement. The IOE further helps the business community to translate the impact of Core Labour Standards into the CSR-policies of global companies, including their supply chain. Furthermore the IOE provides access to global sectoral dialogue as well as guidance to employers internationally on particular sectorial issues and their implications.
2. The IOE presents business leadership in different international institutions and provides to members the ability to engage and influence relevant UN and multilateral organizations such as the WHO, IOM, UNAIDS, World Bank, UNEP and UNDP. Policy recommendations from these institutions thus can better address company needs, such as cutting red tape (World Bank), shaping migration policies in a business-friendly way (IOM), correctly address workers' health (WHO), including business concerns when addressing green jobs and job-related issues to climate change (UNEP). Furthermore the IOE is member of the Global Compact Board and thus can influence the settings of this important global company network.

3. The IOE is a major player in the discussions around human rights and business. To get rid of the concept of Draft Norms on Human Rights for businesses was a major achievement of the IOE. It is also in the lead of the international business community to advise John Ruggie, the special representative of the Human Rights Commission for the issue of Human Rights and business.
4. The business community, through the IOE, is influencing the ISO 26000 process on Social Responsibility of organizations in order to make sure that a useful guidance document evolves out of this process that is practical and applicable to all organizations and which does not put companies under new certifying pressures. However, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an issue which cannot be addressed through universal standard setting and certification. The IOE will continue to oppose any attempts to standardize CSR as this would be very detrimental to the individual initiatives of companies and contrary to its voluntary nature.

II. GLOBAL EMPLOYERS' NETWORK AND SERVICE TO MEMBERS

5. The IOE provides a global network through access to employers' organizations in 142 countries throughout the world to assist their member companies in their global operations thereby providing a platform for learning, partnerships and the exchange of good practice, and ideas.
6. This exchange is encouraged, moderated and supported by working groups in the IOE, for example on CSR, which offers a unique opportunity for a global exchange of experiences. Furthermore the Global Industrial Relations Network and the Network International Occupational Safety and Health are important platforms to provide members and their companies with these services.
7. Updated information on emerging issues and challenges in the different regions are regularly shared with IOE membership. IOE policy and guidance materials help members in local debates with the global perspective. Through the IOE, members can influence global labour and social policy making in emerging key areas such as climate change, labour related matters, the migration debate, new forms of social security, etc.
8. To protect members' interests, the IOE provides guidance and access to the complaints procedures in the ILO, both to prevent attacks and to react to specific initiatives that can damage specific enterprises or national business interests.

III. IOE AS COUNTERPART VIS-À-VIS GLOBAL UNION ACTIVITIES

9. Advice is also provided to members and their companies on how to dialogue with global unions on key global industrial relations and social dialogue issues.
10. New forms of global social dialogue are emerging between an increasing number of largely European based multinational companies and Global Trade Union federations. Establishing global standards for operations around the world, these agreements impact not only the multinational itself but also their suppliers, both within Europe and elsewhere. The IOE can assist European member federations - and through them also their respective member companies - in understanding the impact of these agreements. Assisting them with information and advice of the implications of proposed content, especially as they relate to the use of international labour standards is a highly specialized service which can thus be provided to multinational companies. The IOE continues to monitor the development of these agreements through its unique interface with the Global Unions and their Secretariat.
11. The IOE has established permanent communication links with the most representative international TUs and some relevant international NGOs. This close exchange facilitates the elaboration of internationally-agreed strategies in some non-conflictual areas such as workers' health, youth employment, labour administration, HIVAIDS, education, etc.; the advancement in delicate areas such as social security reform, modernization of labour standards or realistic migration policies; and the solution and prevention of international conflicts or campaigns affecting specific multinational enterprises, all contribute to creating a policy environment supportive of global business activity.

Oslo, September 2008