



2008/108471 Project Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) in the Work place, Bulgaria  
Проект 2008/108471 "Здравословни, безопасни и екологични условия на труд", България

***International conference***

***IMPROVING THE SOCIAL DIALOGUE  
VIA STRENGTHENING OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS'  
COMMITTEES***

***Международна конференция***

***ПОДОБРЯВАНЕ НА СОЦИАЛНИЯ ДИАЛОГ***

***ЧРЕЗ УКРЕПВАНЕ КАПАЦИТЕТА НА КОМИТЕТИТЕ ПО УСЛОВИЯ  
НА ТРУД***

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATIVE  
FRAMEWORK AND PRACTICE IN BULGARIA AND  
NORWAY**

**Line Eldring  
Nadezhda Daskalova**

***Sofia, 24-25.03.2010***

The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# Report prepared by researchers of FAFO and ISTUR

## Structure:

### Chapter 1 and 2

- national institutional and legislative frameworks,
- practices and research concerning industrial relations, social dialogue and workers participation in Norway and Bulgaria

**Chapter 3** - comparative analysis - main differences in industrial relations development and practices of social dialogue and employee participation and factors behind them

**Chapter 4** - lessons learned and the way forward



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# Comparing frameworks and practice of social dialogue and workers participation

striking differences between the two countries

- in economic and social areas,
- but also in development of labour relations and social dialogue and
- the efficiency of employee participation at the workplace



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



	<b>NO</b>	<b>BG</b>	<b>EU27</b>
GDP per capita (in purchasing power standards, index: EU27=100, 2007)	178.6	37.3	100
Real GDP growth (% change on previous year) (annual average 2004–2007)	3.00	6.3	2.63
Inflation rate (annual average 2004–2007)	1.33	6.8	2.18
Gross annual earnings, in € (2005)	45,485	2,626	28,992
Employment rate (15–64 years) (2007) %	76.8	61.7	65.4
Female employment rate (15–64 years) (2007)	74	57.6	58.3
Unemployment rate (15–64 years) (2007) %	2.5	6.9	7.1



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# Huge gap in economic development

- Norway is developed country with successful small and open economy and is one of the best performing welfare societies in Europe
- Bulgaria is one of the poorest members of the European Union, with an economy marked by low competitiveness, low incomes, inequality and social exclusion of large groups of the population.
- The huge gap, especially concerning the GDP per capita and earnings.



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# Norwegian labour relations system

- strong social partners' organisations,
- high level of trade union and employers' density
- wide collective agreements coverage
- well developed system of employees' representation and participation at company level
- cooperation between the employers and the employees at company level is considered one of the basic pillars, which provides legitimacy, enhances productivity, and reduces the conflict level
- regulation of Industrial relations by a combination of legislation and binding collective agreements between trade unions and employers' organisations.
- Norwegian society is built up on solidarity of the population, rooted in the post-war class compromise and societal value system
- The regulation of health, work environment and safety is based on the labour relations system



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# Bulgarian labour relations system

- Social partnership in the western pluralist and democratic sense built up on shared responsibility and cooperation is new phenomenon
- actors in industrial relations system are still learning how to achieve a cooperative social partnership model with mutual gains for labour and capital
- low trade union and employer density + fragmentation
- combination of both adversarial and cooperative relations depending on the issues debated and the context
- controversy and conflict at company level (ban on trade union membership, refusal to negotiate, etc)
- At national level – unsuccessful pacts, formal
- Bulgarian society - highly divided on different grounds (ideological, political, social, and cultural) and is more and more individualistic since the start of transition.

# LESSONS LEARNED

- Practical experience in Norway confirms the important role of social dialogue in improving the quality of working conditions.
- Cooperation, mutual trust and shared commitment of social partners at all levels of the industrial relations system is the key for strong economy, successful business and improved wellbeing of employees.
- However no simple transfer of experience and good practice is possible without considering the context and environment where social dialogue is developing.

# LESSONS LEARNED

The impact of social dialogue on working conditions depends on five conditions:

- the existence of independent, representative and strong social partners;
- the degree of cooperation between them, including mutual recognition and engagement in good faith;
- the supportive role of the institutions engaged in health and safety issues including through a sound legal framework and effective law and enforcement institutions;
- the existence of effective and integrated social dialogue institutions at national, sectoral, and workplace levels;
- practice and experience in the conduct of social dialogue.



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# LESSONS LEARNED

- It is important not only to build up the necessary legislative and institutional framework, but also to ensure the readiness and political will of all parties to engage in dialogue.
- Governments must value the social dialogue and should be ready to share the power with the social partners.
- Social dialogue should not be considered just a form of crisis management.
- dialogue must be based on mutual trust and confidence built up over long years of cooperation in good faith. The Norwegian experience showed that the social dialogue is equally important both in times of crisis (Basic agreement of 1935 and post-war compromise) and in times of favourable economic development.



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# LESSONS LEARNED

Social dialogue on working conditions on national and sector/branch level in Bulgaria needs new impetus.

- It must be vested in laws and regulations as well as in collective agreements.
- It needs more committed social partners and better, less formal, but more efficient national tripartite bodies able to participate in the elaboration and in the implementation of the regulation, policies and collective agreements.
- The compliance with legislation and internal regulations on health and safety and the implementation of collective agreements is a key to success.



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



# LESSONS LEARNED

For social dialogue on working conditions to be successful at company level both parties, the employer and employee representatives need to have the mutual trust and respect necessary to be able to work together for resolving the potentially conflicting aims, points of view and expectations.

In this respect two interesting lessons were shared by the Norwegian colleagues at the seminars:

- Trust and ability to work together can be built if starting with the smaller or less controversial issues before moving to more complex or potentially challenging issues.
- The relationship between management and safety representatives is one of both “*boxing and dancing*”, not either or, as it is recognised that the parties have both common and conflicting interests.

# The way ahead

Further coordinated actions, policy and shared commitment is needed for:

- The implementation of the law providing for the establishment of working conditions committees or groups in all companies
- More enlarged role of collective agreements at all levels, namely at company level for improvement of the working environment
- Measures for supporting the effectiveness of the workers representatives on OSH as just having representation at the workplace is not guarantee that the workers interests and concerns about health and safety will be protected
- Adequate training, access to expertise and information
- • Systematic support from trade unions, employers, control bodies and other relevant institutions



The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria

Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България



## The comparative analysis proved the conclusion made in other surveys on a positive relationship between:

- more generous social policies and more regulated labour markets;
- the development of employment and work-related laws and regulations;
- higher unionisation rates and collective bargaining power *and*
- the implementation of positive health and safety at work measures, increased workers' participation, and other positive conditions and determinants that may help to improve the effectiveness of the actions taken by safety representatives