

What can social partners contribute to make enforcement endeavours of labour inspectorates more effective?

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Governance Conventions on Labour Inspection

Convention No. 81 Labour Inspection - Industry and Commerce	1947
Convention No. 129 Labour Inspection in Agriculture	1969

148 ratifications

54 ratifications

Recommendation 1947 (No. 81)

Recommendation 1969 (No. 133)

Protocol 1995 (No. 81)

Recommendation No. 20



Normative references on collaboration between labour inspectorates and social partners (C150/C81/C129)³

C150, Art. 5 (1) “arrangements appropriate to national conditions to secure, within the system of labour administration, consultation, co-operation and negotiation between the public authorities and the most representative organisations of employers and workers or – where appropriate – employers’ and workers’ representatives”

C81, Art. 5 and C129, Art. 12 (2) – Competent authority shall make appropriate arrangements to promote collaboration between officials of the labour inspectorate and employers and workers or their organizations

R81, §II (5) Representatives of workers and management, in particular members of safety committees or similar bodies should be authorized to collaborate directly with labour inspectors, in a manner and within limits fixed by the competent authority in investigations and, in particular, enquiries into industrial accidents or occupational diseases

R81 – Other: organization of conferences or joint committees for discussions on implementation of labour legislation, lectures, health and safety exhibitions...

Other references

Conclusions of Report on Labour Administration and Labour Inspection, ILC 2011

Governments should build effective systems of labour administration and labour inspection through social dialogue

The presence of workers' and employers' organizations facilitates the work of labour inspectorates

The Office should strengthen consultation and capacity of workers and employers and their organizations in designing policies and tools for labour administration and oversight with a view to implementing the Decent Work Agenda

What hampers the effectiveness of labour inspection

(according to most frequent observations of ILO supervisory bodies)

- ❖ Tasks asked from labour inspectors in detriment of main functions
- ❖ Insufficient staff and other resources
- ❖ Lack of qualified staff
- ❖ Low wages and unattractive careers with no prospects for promotion
- ❖ Prior authorization of inspection visits
- ❖ Lack of other authority prerogatives
- ❖ Lack of collaboration with social partners
- ❖ Lack of cooperation with other public authorities (ex: COVID-19)
- ❖ Legal framework is not conducive to effective labour inspection (ex: exclusion of sectors, SME, groups of workers)
- ❖ No incentives for compliance, namely absence of sanctions or non-deterrent sanctions (or never enforced)
- ❖ Lack or insufficient coordination by central authority
- ❖ Lack of data (no evidence-based decision)

Social partners can address these work with to governments to address these issues (political pressure)

How can in practice social partners assist in increasing the effectiveness of labour inspection

- ❖ Lobbying for more professional (and resourced) labour inspectorates
- ❖ Engaging in the definition and implementation of strategic compliance interventions
- ❖ Providing data/ information that will increase the evidence available to the inspectorate to better plan and use resources
- ❖ Engage in joint awareness raising and education
- ❖ Assist inspectorates in investigations – while respecting the impartiality and public prerogatives of labour inspectorates, and protection of privacy or classified information
- ❖ Self-regulating
- ❖ Being part of management or advisory boards at national and/or local level to define common priorities and programmes (e.g. inspection campaigns)
- ❖ Surveilling compliance with ratified ILO conventions
- ❖ Assist inspectorates in devising and putting into practice systemic and political interventions
- ❖ screening individual cases submitted to inspection to avoid dispersion of resources
- ❖ To the extent possible, agree and coordinate interventions (cost gains and consistency)
- ❖ Co-define and engage in strategies to maintain and sustain compliance over time
- (...)