



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 30 September 2016

12715/16

**SOC 578
EMPL 382
ECOFIN 855**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Collective bargaining and the future of work: update on the negotiations
process on labour market reforms in Greece
= Information from the Greek delegation

Delegations will find attached a document from the Greek delegation on the above subject, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 13 October 2016 (Any Other Business).

BACKGROUND PAPER

Update on the process of the negotiations on labour market reforms in Greece and information about the Conference organised by the Greek Labour Ministry, with the involvement of the ILO, on collective bargaining and the future of work.

1. The course of the negotiations between Greece and its European and International creditors in the area of labour market reforms.
2. The outcome of the Conference to be held in Athens on the 16th and 17th of September on “Collective Bargaining in the European Social Model and the Future of Work”. The Conference stands as the contribution of Greece to the International Labour Organisation’s Future of Work Initiative and the conclusions are intended to feed into the negotiation process.

In Greece, the collective bargaining system has gone through major changes since 2010, following the financial crisis and the Memoranda of Understanding, and as a consequence collective bargaining has substantially weakened. The Greek government continues to believe, however, in its value as a fundamental pillar of the European Social Model and thus a reconfirmation of the role of collective bargaining is a top priority. Therefore, this issue is the main focus of the current round of negotiations.

A thorough discussion on the role of social partners and the future of collective bargaining system, in light of the European Social Charter and the relevant International Labour Conventions, is indeed very timely. The September conference will address this dialogue with the participation of Greek and other European social partners, academics and representatives of international organizations.

The challenges are multiple. The appearance, especially in the midst of globalized developments, of new and flexible forms of work and also the specialized work and the multiethnic origin of the workforce have differentiated to a substantial degree the reference framework and the physiognomy of the modern trade union movement. Although to a lesser extent, the employers' side faces similar developments. It is therefore crucial to search together with the social partners and the whole international community for ways to embed a strong and modernized social dialogue into the economic government of the European Union.

These issues extend beyond the Greek borders. The financial crisis has put social dialogue and collective bargaining under pressure throughout the EU and the interplay between labour market reforms and social dialogue is a common challenge. Coming out of the crisis, ways should be explored to ensure that once again collective bargaining can play its role as a cornerstone of the European Social Model. The form and the evolution in the organization of the collective bargaining system, as well as the interaction between the traditional and new forms of trade union organization are issues that, being at the core of industrial relations, concern all Member States and should therefore remain on the European agenda.