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COLLECTIVE PREPARATION MECHANISM (CPM)

TRANSNATIONAL GUIDELINES

for

PREPARATION & MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE AND RESTRUCTURING





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Introduction

These transnational guidelines are the output of the Action “*F.O.R.M. PACT: multi-level and multi-actor synergies toward the adaptation to social and economic change*” in which a number of case studies were discussed amongst social partners, stakeholders and relevant key actors in four countries (Germany, France, Bulgaria and Romania). The mutual learning from this exercise has contributed to the identification of a “Preparation mechanism”, which consists of elements shared by the involved countries and which aims at preparing for change, within a transnational dimension. The project acronym (*F.O.R.M. PACT*) stresses the idea of an operational partnership (beyond the formal agreement) for strengthening the “collective” efforts towards a sustainable mechanism of exchanging information, agreeing on common objectives and sharing core values.

In its Green Paper on “Restructuring and Anticipation of change (2012)” the European Commission has emphasised that Europe

faces major challenges in seeking to raise employment levels and tackle unemployment by increasing the use of active labour market policies and by reforming education and training systems to make sure that jobseekers are equipped with the right skills and that companies can rely on a competitive workforce. All of this requires good anticipation as well as tools to match labour supply with demand to the fullest possible extent. Facilitating business adaptation and labour market transitions via better anticipation of human capital needs, should be seen in this wider context. The European policy framework (Europe 2020) also emphasises the need to support job creation in areas that will generate significant job opportunities in the years to come. In particular, the green economy, the digital economy and health sector have been identified as fast-growing sectors emerging from profound structural transformations of European economy and society.

To this end, the European Commission presented a “Quality Frame-

work [QFR] (COM 2013/882) for anticipation of change and restructuring” in which the need to integrate anticipation of and preparation for change is highlighted, as well as the urgent need for a multi-level and multi-actor approach. This QFR foresees “actions and instruments” that are considered to be good practices in terms of the anticipation of change and the management of restructuring processes, alongside multilevel profiles which include companies, trade unions, employers’ organisations, sectoral organisations, and regional and national authorities. Good anticipation, preparation and management of change require anticipative and continuous analysis of trends in terms of technological and competitive conditions, as well as of human resources and training needs, linked to a systematic, integrated and coordinated approach in support of an effective implementation of timely actions focused on potential job creation in a sustainable sector.

Aim of the guidelines

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide a basic framework for social partners, regional authorities, local authorities, companies and sectoral organisations/associations aimed at supporting identification of the key steps necessary to the setting up and running of a collective preparation mechanism in response to forecasted changes. A long-term standing mechanism of systematic coordination between actors/stakeholders/areas of intervention at sectoral level is essential in the process of preparing for change. A basic framework can provide useful inputs in terms of outlining an information and consultation procedure that supports timely actions in the context of economic and social changes, with a view to optimising restructuring processes.

The guidelines highlight the need for a systematic mechanism for:

- Coordinating and integrating different actors/stakeholders responsible in various phas-

es of the implementation of measures for anticipating and preparing for change

- Contributing actively and systematically to the programming process of potential job creation at sectoral level for ensuring adequate preparation for the changes forecast by the anticipation process
- Participating in the monitoring process during the implementation of the measures adopted, with a view to enhancing the preparation mechanism on a continuous basis

The transnational guidelines are in two parts. The first describes the theoretical requirements and wishful characteristics of a CPM” defined by the partners in this project. The second part presents the theoretical CPM as seen by practitioners during the national seminars.

Part I . Preparation mechanism

1.1 The context

The European framework on restructuring shows that companies and public authorities must not be caught unprepared by economic change. In general, early warning systems aim to predict the timing of restructuring, and to some extent to prevent it or at least to limit its potential damage to human resources. However, what still seems to be lacking is effective communication between forecasting institutions and social partners. Providing credible intelligence to policymakers that elicits action requires more than simply identifying risks and vulnerabilities. Restructuring forecasts need to be precise and compelling, consist of robust but plausible scenarios, outline the consequences of inaction and lead to specific policy advice.

It is said that “forewarned is forearmed,” meaning that if stakeholders know about something before it happens they can be prepared for it. As a result, the link between knowledge and ac-

tion is crucial, since knowledge without action cannot change a situation and action without knowledge leads to uncertain results.

The Form Pact project hypothesis falls within the above-mentioned framework, which is theoretical and pragmatic at the same time. Theoretical because it follows the expected change obtained from scenario studies (foresight) or forecasting exercises. Pragmatic because it entails a “timely action” in order to mitigate the negative effects of restructuring. The resulting Collective Preparation Mechanism (CPM), which contains both theoretical and pragmatic elements, enriches the traditional process as set out by the European Commission, made up of anticipation and management of restructuring, in that the CPM exploits the output of the anticipation phase (knowledge) and timely acts in the face of change, namely the redeployment of jobs or skills adaptation towards new and emerging sectors or businesses.

1.2 Meaning of Collective Preparation mechanism

A Collective Preparatory Mechanism (CPM) has been defined by the Project Partnership on the basis¹ of theoretical and experiential elements as follows:

“A systematic process of multi-stakeholders dialogue in a multi-level context, based on common goals and timely actions towards a socio-economic change”.

The CMP is characterised by the following fundamental factors:

- Stakeholders as a “Community” engaged in policies development;
- Institutional dialogue to be implemented at different levels: local, regional, sectorial and national;
- Territorial context based on lo-

cal economy approach towards a common response to change;

- Timely actions to be understood “*in a useful or suitable time*”.
- Common goal, which includes the collective identity, the cooperative behaviour and shared values.
- Nature: anticipatory-proactive vs. reactive. The idea is to leave behind stand-alone, individual (re-)actions vis-à-vis social and economic changes, and to bundle them into a multi-actor approach that comprises all relevant levels, realising efficiency gains not least through an explicitly systematic preparation for upcoming changes.

The information and consultation mechanism within the CPM should be focused on all these elements:

- **Actors** (regional/local authorities, public employment services (PES), social partners and their research centres, the vocational education and train-

ing (VET) system, early warning systems, universities, research institutes and development agencies)

- **Areas** for anticipating and preparing for change (life-long learning (LLL), re-skilling and re-deployment measures (CVET), new technologies, access to finance and research and development)
- **Instruments** available at EU / national /sectorial level (forecasting tools, financial resources, for example ESF / ERDF funds ,etc).

¹ Collective action (M. Olson, 1965), Experiential learning (D.Kolbe, 1984), the Idea of the Commons (E. Ostrom, 1990), the Hypothesis of the third way (A.Giddens, 1998) and the Multi-stakeholders approach (J. Woodhill, 2004, UNDP, 2012).

1.3. Functioning of the CPM

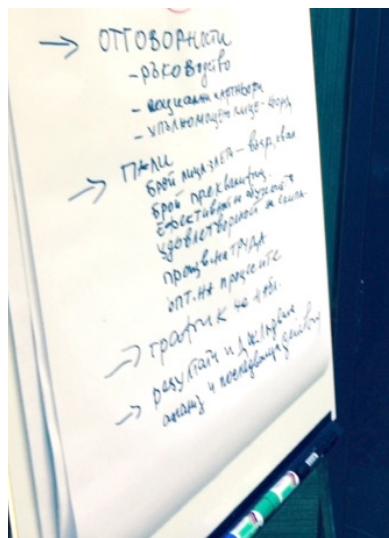
Following the definition of the CPM, it is important to explain how it could work. An important element, which puts together the components of the CPM, is the establishment of a CPM structure. A permanent partnership-building function should be in force to manage the divergent issues towards a convergent vision on the forecasted economic and social change. Stakeholder involvement is the fundamental element of the CPM mechanism.

The common vision entails strategic thinking generated among stakeholders, based on interdependency between the knowledge of the past, the present and the future. Strategic thinking merges stakeholder vision for change with knowledge patterns and this is needed in order to understand whether the community is on the right course. What is the ultimate goal? In what way does the CPM mechanism reconcile strategic thinking with strategic planning? Such questions are crucial in a context of restructuring, where the vision coincides with decision-making that orients timely actions for change.

of preparation for change (horizontal structure) with an example of actions and instruments (vertical structure) considered good practices by the EC in the Quality Framework (QFR) for anticipation of change and management of restructuring processes, alongside a multi-level structure which includes companies, trade unions, employers' organisations, sectorial organisations, regional and national authorities. Needless to say, each expected CPM implemented in a determined territory shall develop only specific cells that are consistent with the related strategy.

Once vision and strategy are shared and agreed among the local community, the CPM mechanism enters into play. Understanding change and agreeing on strategic thinking lead to the preparation phase that merges anticipation, implementation and monitoring.

The proposed CPM scheme combines the different components and phases of the entire process



Measures set out in the EU Quality Framework for anticipation of Change and Restructuring
(Reference to Territorial, Sectoral, Company level)

CPM Features		Anticipation		Preparation						
		Economic Forecasting & Foresight	Mapping Skills need Anticipation	Training Policy		Labour Market Policies			Social Dialogue	Local Development
				Training & Career dev	Professional Transition	Multiannual plan for jobs & skills	ALMP	PES	Internal & External Mobility	Information, Consultation Negotiation
Structure	Existing Social Dialogue Structures									
	Multi-Stakeholders Involvement Mechanism (SP Inclusion)									
	Stakeholders Capacity building (Partnership and Trust)									
Analysis	Common diagnosis of contextual change									
	Collective understanding Change pattern (Shared Vision)									
Strategy	Agreed Common Goals									
Functioning	Available financial resources									
	Ability to raise financial resources									
	Operational Time Line definition									
	Available Competence, Methods, Capability									
	Collective readiness for change									
	Coordination Capacity									
	Merging Individual into collective actions									
Monitoring & Evaluation	Structured way of Preparation process (evaluation)									
	Inclusion and Stakeholder participation (monitoring)									
	Instruments used (monitoring)									
	CPM Success (Anticipation-Preparation evaluation)									

The key components and phases (vertical structure) are mainly addressing the need to:

- Explaining the necessary structure for ensuring a smooth and sustainable mechanism based on existing social dialogue structures and Stakeholder capacity building (partnership and trust);
- Focusing on the analysis of existing data and information based on common diagnosis and collective understanding change pattern (shared vision)
- Stressing the importance of reaching an agreement on common strategy towards the forecasted changes (i.e. a professional transition scheme in a determined sector hit by a severe crisis)
- Pointing out the main activities necessary for ensuring a sound and solid functioning as: financial resources availability; operational timeline definition, capability and collective readiness for change, merging individual to collective actors

- Highlighting the relevance of the setting up and keeping up of a monitoring/evaluation mechanism for elaborating measurable indicators and for assessing the impact of the implemented strategy (i.e number of effective programmes for professional transition carried out in a determined sector and related job opportunities identified);

The proposed scheme offers the combination with the main areas delineated by the EU QFR (2013), namely:

Anticipation, aimed at elaborating Economic forecasting and foresighting and mapping future skills needs.

Preparation, which includes – inter alia - the training and career development, as well as the professional transition scheme, multiannual plan for jobs and skills, active labour market policies, strengthening role of Public Employment Services and measures for internal and external mobility . In parallel , for the Preparation for changes it is requested

a solid and effective mechanism of social dialogue at each level. In addition to that, a particular attention is put on the local development through the territorial and employment pacts.

National Seminars carried out in France, Germany, Bulgaria and Romania were held in order to discuss and refine the proposed CPM. The logic and structure have been checked by practitioners and other national experts. The results of these seminars are shown in the following part.

Part II. Key elements for Collective Preparation Mechanism (CPM) setting up: results of the national seminars

The second part of this document sets out the detail of the different elements of the CPM, in the form of transnational guidelines. These guidelines have been developed on the basis of the documentation and discussions that took place in four national seminars during the course of this project. The seminars were held in Paris (France), Stuttgart (Germany), Sofia (Bulgaria) and Bucharest (Romania). Each seminar was led by a national expert, who presented a national paper that included case study examples of best practice in the anticipation and management of restructuring. Discussions based on this paper and the case study examples then took place in all the seminars. This was followed by group work in which seminar participants set out their views on issues such as the elements that are needed for successful anticipation and

management of restructuring.

The guidelines are divided into three parts as follows:

- Basis and Anticipation.
- Management of change.
- Evaluation and monitoring.



2.1 Basis and anticipation

- Requirements of the social dialogue system within the CPM:
 - **Framework.** There should be a framework in place that allows the actors to engage in regular dialogue. In Germany and France, there is a strong framework that enables the actors to engage regularly and in a meaningful way. However, the existence of a framework by itself is not enough – the social partners need to be able and/or willing to interact. In Romania, for example, the framework is in place, but the social partners find it difficult to engage in dialogue. Similarly, there are reports of difficulties in engaging in positive dialogue in Bulgaria at national and company level, although there are also examples of cooperation.
 - **Flexible approach.** Building an effective social dialogue system should be under-

taken slowly and based on a flexible approach, which can be amended and tailored according to experience. This is one of the lessons that can be learned from examples such as the Stuttgart Structural Report case study in Germany, where the cooperation between the partners has been built up slowly over a number of years.

- Requirements from the actors within the social dialogue system:
 - **Meaningful dialogue.** The actors should be capable of meaningful involvement in dialogue (i.e the social partners should have a proper mandate from their members, and the state should take their participation seriously). This is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a functioning social dialogue. This is easier in a context where there is a long history of social dialogue between the actors, in a well-developed framework, as is

the case in Germany. Nevertheless, there are examples of the social partners being involved in negotiations over restructuring in other countries. In Bulgaria, for example, trade unions were involved in negotiations over the closure of the uranium mining industry, although they were not formally involved in the design and implementation of the legal framework for the liquidation of the industry, due to the fact that this was before the establishment of a modern system of social dialogue and tripartite cooperation.

- **Building trust.** There needs to be trust between the parties. This often comes from a long shared history of cooperation, as is the case with the Stuttgart Structural Report case study in Germany. Trust is a concept that was much discussed in all the seminars. Seminar participants all agreed that this was one of the most vital ingredients of well-developed

social dialogue, without which not a great deal can be achieved. In the case of the restructuring of the K. plant in Bulgaria, the trade unions were active in their involvement in and opposition to the restructuring, although their restructuring proposals were not accepted. By contrast, a huge body of trust is in place in the French case study company Th., a result of 30 years of joint history between the social partners at the company.

- **Openness.** The parties need to be ready and open to engage in change, and to take risks if necessary. This may also involve being open to accepting new ideas. This can be a challenge for all parties, especially for those not used to anticipating change. This is more evident in countries that do not have a culture of anticipation in place and do not have embedded structures and processes to help them to engage in change management.

- **Common understanding and goals and shared analysis.** There needs to be a common understanding of the challenges and a common aim, which is clearly set. Further, the actors need to engage in shared analysis of the available data, leading to the formulation of a strategy for action. Working groups can be a good idea, with a mandate to look at specific issues or areas. One good example of an action that is the result of shared goals and common understanding is the short-time working scheme in Germany, which was used extensively by German companies during the crisis. The government extended the existing scheme to help companies to cope during the crisis. The social partners were fully engaged in this scheme at company level. The use of short-time working at B., one of the German case studies, is explored in detail in this project. Further, the management of

another German case study, the Emscher Park case, was carried out at a very decentralised level, as befits the multitude of heterogeneous projects within the overall project.

- **Compromise.** The actors need to be ready to listen to other points of view and to compromise where necessary. In the case of the restructuring of the K. metalworking plant in Bulgaria, there appeared to be a lack of willingness to compromise in the case of the principal actors. This led, for example, to the government not accepting the trade unions' alternative restructuring proposals.
- **Problem solving spirit and problem awareness.** The actors should take responsibility for themselves and their members and begin social dialogue at the level at which they find themselves. They should not wait for the State to provide tools

such as institutions and legal regulation to solve problems for them. This type of thinking has been behind many of the case studies discussed in this project, particularly those from Germany and France, where the social partners have taken the initiative. In France, for example, the Mécaloire case is a good example of a network of SMEs deciding to join together to achieve the development and restructuring of a region. This is also a good example of how SMEs can react to change.

- **Ownership.** The social partners should try to take ownership of their social dialogue process and the outcomes of this. This is the case in the successful case studies of preparation for change that have been reported in this project. Only by taking ownership and responsibility for outcomes can the social partner move forward together in the face of change.

- Requirements of an anticipatory change management system:

- **Sectoral structures.** It may be advisable to set up sectorial structures to anticipate and manage change, as sectors have differing needs and face different challenges.
- **Information.** There needs to be reliable information and statistics, collected on a regular basis. The information needs to be available in good time, and in a transparent manner, so that everyone can access it. This knowledge can then underpin analysis and decision-making. Knowledge of the context and the impact that any measures are likely to have is also crucial.

2.2 Management of change

- Preparation for the management of change
 - **Early involvement.** The actors need to be involved as early as possible in the management of change. This will be easier if they have already been engaged in regular anticipation dialogue. This is the case at Th., where this a very long joint history of managing change at the company, described as a profound social dialogue culture that has developed over the course of 30 years. The company also has a sophisticated tool box that combines a range of long-, mid- and short-term measures designed to anticipate and manage change. The social partners in this company are therefore well-placed to ensure early involvement in change management.
 - **Financial support.** Access to financial support is vital, as

this will underpin all action taken. A lack of financial support was perceived to be a problem in Romania and Bulgaria but it is also a problem for many SMEs. Access to European financial support is a key factor, particularly in countries where national funding is not readily available. Nevertheless, as the Mécaloire case in France proves, SMEs can achieve a great deal if they are organised and form a cluster in order to promote innovation and change.

- **Government support.** Support from the government is important, both financially and also in terms of supporting the change management programme. For example, Support from a local government – Rhone Alp region for the Mecaloire cluster)
- **Senior management buy-in.** At company level, the culture of anticipation needs to come from senior management. This is the case, for

example, in the French case study of Th.. It helps if there is already a strong culture or framework of anticipation in place, either at company level, or at sector, regional or national level.

- The contents of a change management programme should include one or more components listed below:
 - **Transition schemes.** Transition schemes are crucial. They have to be tailor made for each employee and set up in such a way as to allow each individual manage their professional future. These schemes may include elements such as replacement, outplacement, upskilling, or support for new projects. Training and retraining of workers is important and this should be supported by the state. Active involvement of workers is important as some may be nervous about embarking on training and may need extra support. All the success-

ful case studies reported here had transition plans that included elements that ensured the continuing development and professional future of employees affected by the restructuring. In the area of training the B. case study in Germany is a good example of how to use training during a period of difficulty to ensure continuing employability and skills acquisition of its workforce. It is important that mechanisms exist by which the effectiveness of the transitions schemes is validated.

- **Entrepreneurship.** Supporting entrepreneurship is a key part of change management. Not all workers who are at risk of losing their jobs as a result of restructuring will want to set up their own businesses. However, some will want to try this, and should be encouraged to do so, through targeted help and advice, both from the social partners, the State, and specialist advice

and support agencies. For example, a business counselling service was set up to help workers who wanted to start their own company after losing their jobs following the reorganisation of the Romanian oil and gas company Petrom.

- **Empowering workers.** One key success factor of change management programmes is empowering workers in order to enable them to take responsibility for their own future. Passive measures and top down approaches do not result in successful job to job transitions. The restructuring of the oil and gas company Petrom in Romania is a good example of how workers were encouraged to find alternative professional routes, through means such as outplacement, counselling, training and business advice. The re-employment and placement rate for those supported during the first stage of the restructuring plan was 84%.

- **Sectoral and regional plans.** Change management plans should include sectoral and regional sections in order to target the specific needs of sectors and regions. This project has included a number of case studies that have a regional focus. The Mécaloire case study in France, for example, focuses on a sector that has suffered due to the decline of industry in a particular region. Likewise, the Emscher Park project in Germany focuses on the regeneration and redevelopment of a specific region following its deindustrialisation.
- **Involving SMEs.** The involvement of SMEs presents a particular challenge when managing change, as social dialogue structures tend not to be as well-developed as in larger companies, and they do not have access to the same types of financial resources. Targeted action to help SMEs is therefore a good idea, to help them to

access EU funds where necessary, and to cut red tape for them. The French case study showing a cluster of SMEs (Mécaloire) is a good example of how SMEs can work together in a network in order to achieve innovation and change.

- Concluding and ensuring the setup of a successful change management programme requires:
 - **An open mind.** It is important to consider all options when deciding on which measures should be included in a change management plan, even those that may be unusual or exotic in the national context, such as certain types of flexible working. Short-time working with a dedicated period of training was something that worked for the Germany case study B. This programme also included encouragement for the employees to develop innovation, thus contributing to the company's future

development, once the recession was over.

- **Clear objectives.** Change management programmes must contain clear objectives that have been agreed by the actors. This is particularly important in the case of workforce downsizing and cost cutting. Employees need to know whether their jobs are safe or not; they can then begin to work with the reality that they face.
- **A timetable.** Measures need to be agreed on within a set timetable, in order to ensure that they are put into place. A coordinating body should be responsible for overseeing this, ideally on a tripartite basis. The Emscher Park case study in Germany is, for example, a very long-term project that has a specific timetable and a long-term vision.

2.3 Evaluation and monitoring

- **Ongoing monitoring.** Agreed change measures should be monitored on an ongoing basis in an agreed way. This will enable corrections to the change management to be made if necessary. As the Emscher Park case study in Germany is such a long-term project, ongoing monitoring is a core part of the overall plan.
- **Multi-stakeholder monitoring.** The monitoring body should be a multi-stakeholder body wherever possible, in order to be as inclusive as possible.
- **Independent evaluation.** A final evaluation of the measures should be undertaken and validated by neutral experts and the stakeholders, then publicised. This should include information about what worked well and what did not work well, in order to inform future restructuring

management exercises. Impact and outcome indicators would add weight to evaluation exercises.

- **Dissemination.** Dissemination of key success factors should be undertaken in order to share good practice both nationally and internationally.



Conclusions

The F.ORM Pact project has resulted in a valuable insight into how change is anticipated and managed in four EU Member States: France, Germany, Bulgaria and Romania (reference to Discussion Papers elaborated for each country before the national workshops). One of the main objectives of this project was to encourage exchange of practice in relation to the anticipation and management of change between the social partners and the public authorities in these four countries mentioned, through the medium of a series of tripartite seminars. The case studies that have been presented and discussed at these seminars have shown how the social partners and the government have reacted to change in a range of circumstances, sectors and economic and industrial relations contexts. It is fair to say that countries such as France and Germany have a longer history of joint working and bipartite/tripartite cooperation than Bulgaria and Romania, where the institutions and procedures have only been in place for 25 years.

This may sound like a long time, but in reality, it takes a significant amount of time for practices to become truly embedded, particularly in the context of severe economic trauma and upheaval. It has been recognised the need to develop a regulatory framework for passing from sporadic interventions to a systematic process of co – operation multi – level and multi- stakeholder for planning , implementing and monitoring the preparation for economic and social changes, so as to move from “reactive” to “proactive” approach. Moreover, it has been understood that education and training have a crucial role to play in the successful transition of economies and it is necessary to create continuous synergies amongst social partners, government and various stakeholders such Business community, bilateral and multilateral institutions, Academic Institutes, Implementing Agencies.

There are some good examples of preparation for change from all countries. Two major fields of ac-

tivity have been identified:

- Anticipation of change, consisting of economic forecasting and foresight activities, in particular regarding the skills needed in different types of activities;
- Preparation for change, which includes training and labour market policies, social dialogue and local development.

Although national contexts and circumstances vary considerably, common themes emerge from the case studies and seminar discussions in all countries. These include factors such as the putting into place of the appropriate structures and processes, trust, ownership of the process, early anticipation and involvement, the need of strategic objectives and strategic thinking and support from key actors such as the state, senior management, and institutions that are able to finance restructuring programmes, including European funding bodies.

Management of change is perceived as a guided direction, based on sound leadership towards long term goals and a fair management style aimed at step-by-step adaptation. In this context, change is described as a process in which behavioural knowledge and practices are used to help organisations to achieve greater effectiveness including improved quality of life, increased productivity and service offer. In parallel, many obstacles and constraints have been identified such as, strong defence mechanism leading to resistance to change, fear of uncertainty, a necessary leap of faith into the unknown, etc, not expressly related to a specific case study but in wider context. In order to overcome those obstacles, it has been recognised that an effective dialogue leads to change, supported by access to relevant information, mutual trust, capacity to prepare a sound planning when first symptoms of crisis are coming, team building and trust building, quality of leadership, training for developing negotia-

tion and communication skills, special attention to SMEs.

While not all the practices detailed in the seminars are easily transferable across national borders, we have sought to highlight the key success factors for the preparation for change, in the form of these guidelines. We believe that the principles contained in these guidelines can be considered universal and applicable to various economic, cultural, social and institutional settings.

For more information on the “F.O.R.M. Pact” Project: m.rossirizzi@itcilo.org

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