

Social dialogue – building on joint development

In order to discuss the practices of the trilateral social dialogue in Latvia, the first promotion of the Local and Regional Tripartite Social Dialogue in Riga took place in November last year, in which both businessmen and municipalities, as well as representatives of Norway, participated. The project is being implemented by RUB in cooperation with Riga City municipalities, as well as a number of non-governmental organisations, including the Latvian Social Business Association, the Latvian Business Union, the Latvian Association of Communications Workers, as well as by attracting an expert in the field of social dialogue from the Kingdom of Norway.

The Norwegian ambassador to Latvia, Christian Edegør, stressed at the event that issues of social dialogue and decent work are a priority for Norway as a state. "Our countries – Norway and Latvia – have a successful market, economic and social relationship. That is why we want to give the Latvian public our 100-year experience in the field of social dialogue in Norway in order to strengthen trilateral cooperation and social dialogue in Latvia. Decent work is a subject not only of adequate and dignified remuneration for workers, but also of personal safety, protection and freedom. Norway is investing in many countries a multitude of millions of euros in support of funding for the transfer of democracy and Norway's successful social dialogue experience."

On the other hand, the Chairman of the RUB Board, Juris Juhnevics, stressed that the tripartite social dialogue could solve many issues, particularly in the economic sphere. "At this point, it's significant because we see decisions being taken in a hurry, without consultation. We as a country are facing a major challenge to make Latvia's economy recover more quickly and successfully in the post-crisis period," said the businessmen 'representative.

Edite Alksne recalled that a particularly important social dialogue is right now, when Latvian businessmen, just like entrepreneurs around the world, are very aware of the business crisis caused by the restrictions on the spread of the Covid-19 virus. "We all know that tourism, hospitality and catering and many other industries have been stopped for many months, while other industries are experiencing persistent difficulties. It is clear that business problems not only lead to a decline in business income, but also lead to serious business survival. At the moment, as if a series of State aid programmes have been launched, the often crucial factor in the failure to destroy a successful business in the municipality for many years is precisely the self-government's understanding of the situation and its willingness to help those who are one of the most important contributors to the well-being of the county. Not just a formal tick.

At the same time, entrepreneurs point out that it is important that the Saeima, the government and local governments not only formally implement the social dialogue with the various non-governmental organisations representing society as a whole, often even by formally listening to the views or objections of the partners, in terms of jobs. In particular, the protracted crisis poses significant risks to reducing employment levels, and this is why close cooperation between municipalities and business is all the more important in looking for ways and solutions to allow entrepreneurs working in the local government in difficulty to stay afloat.

It is important to set up collaborative platforms for think tanks of a kind, consisting of both entrepreneurs and scientists and civil servants and politicians, whose discussions, exchanges and constructive dialogues would lead to a business-friendly environment that would contribute to both economic growth and international competitiveness and higher tax revenues. State and local government budgets.

Therefore, the commitment of the new parliamentary term of the Riga City Council to improve and expand cooperation with entrepreneurs and city residents, including by identifying their needs and expectations and taking them to the maximum extent in the day-to-day and binding decisions of the local government. "Politicians need to have regular talks with the non-governmental sector, residents and business environment representatives. It is necessary to work together to create well-paid jobs in Riga. My common aim is to introduce innovation, urban digitisation and address urban challenges through modern solutions. Investment attraction is very important for Riga, as well as targeted support for start-ups, infrastructure projects, people's attraction for Riga," said Inese Andersone, Chairman of the City Development Committee of the City Council. She also called for an advisory board to meet twice a year to discuss topical issues and offer issues. Many issues can then be addressed at the level of sectoral business organisations and civil society organisations, believes the politician.