





European Platform tackling undeclared work

Joint targeted inspections by the Greek Labour Inspectorate (SEPE) and the Athens Labour Union Organisation (EKA)

Greece

	<p>Summary</p> <p>In 2017 the Greek Labour Inspectorate (SEPE) invited the Athens Labour Union Organisation (EKA trade union) to participate in a pilot project of targeted joint inspections.ⁱ The pilot project aimed to detect incidences of undeclared work in selected companies from a list drawn up by the inspectorate. The EKA provided information to the labour inspectorate which helped the Inspectorate to target their inspections.</p>
<p>Name(s) of authorities/bodies/organisations involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athens Labour Union Organisation (EKA-Εργατοϋπαλληλικό Κέντρο Αθήνας) • Greek Labour Inspectorate (SEPE-Σώμα Επιθεώρησης Εργασίας)
<p>Sectors</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies suspected of practicing undeclared and under-declared work (directly targeted); • Workers involved in undeclared and under-declared work (indirectly targeted).
<p>Purpose of measure</p>	<p>Deterrence: improve detection</p>

	<p>Aims and objectives</p> <p>The objective of the practice was to carry out targeted joint inspections in the Athens Metropolitan Area to improve detection of undeclared and under-declared work. It aimed to make inspections more systematic and effective through the direct involvement of union organisations.</p>
<p>Background context</p>	<p>The practice of joint inspections was introduced against the background of a high incidence of undeclared and under-declared work, especially in particular sectors and activities (restaurants and hotels, tourist industry, personal services,</p>




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	<p>construction, textiles and garments industry, entertainment, etc.) that results in the violation of workers' social security rights and in underpaid work. In 2017 the EKA was invited to participate in inspections, due to the contribution it could make in terms of its knowledge and hands-on experience with sectors and companies that were more likely to be involved in undeclared or under-declared work.</p> <p>The targeted joint inspections were the outcome of cooperation between the trade unions and the labour inspectorate which occurred for a few weeks in the summer of 2017.</p>
Key objectives of the measure	<p>General Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To combat the extensive use of undeclared work in specific sectors and activities by improving the detection of violations in workers' social security rights and under-declared/unpaid work. <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To participate in targeted joint inspections with the EKA in order to improve the detection of these violations.
Main activities	<p>In the summer of 2017, the EKA participated in a pilot project with the Greek Labour Inspectorate that involved targeted joint inspection visits to companies to check for violations of labour legislation, in particular with respect to undeclared or under-declared work and uninsured or partly insured work. Activities included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two union representatives and two labour inspectors were involved in the joint inspections. Whilst the labour inspectors carried out the actual inspections, the union representatives were present; The Labour Inspectorate decided in which companies and/or workplaces the inspections were to be carried out; The inspections focused on the Athens Metropolitan Area; Inspection reports were drawn up by the labour inspectors and submitted to the Labour Inspectorate which is supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The reports specified



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	<p>whether a company had been caught violating labour legislation and the fine that had been imposed.</p> <p>Although the practice was short-lived, the EKA continues to cooperate with the labour inspectorate and still participates in a number of joint inspections with labour inspectors.</p>
Funding/organisational resources	<p>The joint inspections did not receive national or EU funding. The EKA covered its own staff and transportation costs and any other expenses incurred.</p>

	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Joint inspections proved to be a useful exercise of cooperation between the labour inspectors and the trade unions.</p>
Achievement of objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint inspections were considered to be successful because they were organised effectively. Information provided to the EKA by the primary and secondary level trade unions concerning workplace violations was in turn provided to the Inspectorate, improving the targeting of the joint inspections subsequently carried out. According to the Artemis Report, during the course of 2018, 5.08% of employees working in the inspected companies were found to be undeclared, as compared to 7% in 2015.ⁱⁱ While undeclared work has fallen to approximately 5% of total employment, under-declared work is still much higher, owing to the high incidence of casual work in certain sectors.ⁱⁱⁱ
Lessons learnt and success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade unions can be a useful partner in helping to target the inspections; Employers might benefit from a targeted information campaign on the costs of undeclared work, as the practice of undeclared and under-declared work is occurring even among successful companies;^{iv} Companies with seasonal peaks in their activity (e.g. tourism) need a more tailor-made institutional framework that will allow them to



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	comply with labour legislation (e.g. remuneration of work in lieu of leave days). ^v
Transferability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transferability is possible to other Member States depending on the existence of positive relationships and links between labour inspectorates and trade unions.

Further information	
Contact	<p>SEPE, General Inspector's Office Dragatsaniou 8 Athens Phone: +30 2131516500 Email: gsepe@ypakp.gr</p> <p>Georges Mylonas, President, Athens Labour Union Organisation (EKA) Email: gmylonas1972@gmail.com Phone: +30 210 8836917</p>
Useful sources and resources	<p>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs website www.ypakp.gr</p> <p>Greek Labour Inspectorate (SEPE) website www.sepenet.gr</p> <p>Athens Labour Union Organisation (EKA) website www.eka.org.gr</p>

ⁱ The invitation was sent out following an agreement between the tertiary level workers' organisation General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and the Greek Labour Inspectorate (SEPE).

ⁱⁱ Labour Inspectorate (SEPE), 2019, *Operational Action Plan for Combating Uninsured & Undeclared Work 'ARTEMIS'*, 15 September 2013 – 31 December 2018, Ministry of Employment, Social Security & Social Solidarity.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Interview of G. Mylonas, President of EKA, to the Athens and Macedonian News Agency AMNA, November 18, 2017. Available at:



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<https://www.amna.gr/home/article/206154/Proedros-EKA-Proteraiotita-i-epanafora-ton-Sullogikon-Sumbaseon->

^v The law stipulates that in companies that operate a five-day week, employees are entitled to two consecutive days-off per week, while in companies operating a six- or seven-day week, employees are entitled to one day-off in that week. However, for seasonal activities such as hotels, restaurants, etc. it is not always feasible to give days off and therefore extra days of work must be remunerated accordingly. The issue is currently addressed in an ad hoc way through local collective agreements or individual contracts.