

Questions and Answers

WAPES, ILO, ITUC Webinar - Fair Recruitment in a Digital Age: Migration, Labour Rights & the Role of Public Employment Services, 30th October 2025

Question: In reference to the ILO Tripartism (Consultation) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), how can cross-border cooperation between trade unions be effectively implemented while some destination countries do not permit or allow trade unions or labour unions, while the countries of origin have active trade union structures?

How can this regulatory and institutional gap be addressed within the framework of tripartite dialogue and international labour standards?

Answer: Unfortunately, this is not a question that can be answered within the topics covered in this webinar. We encourage you to use the ILO tripartite structure to your advantage and go through the proper channels of the governments, worker' and employers' representatives at the ILO.

Question: How can trade unions collaborate with public employment services to enhance transparency and accountability in international recruitment, particularly in contexts where abuses are common?

Answer: Trade unions and Public Employment Services can work together to make international recruitment more transparent and accountable by combining their respective strengths: unions' worker networks and PES's regulatory authority. First, they can jointly monitor recruitment agencies, sharing data on licensing and complaints to identify abusive practices. Digital platforms such as the Recruitment Advisor, developed by the ITUC and ILO, can be integrated into PES systems to collect worker feedback and inform agency oversight. PES can forward worker grievances to trade unions or trusted support organizations, ensuring follow-up and protection. Secondly, joint awareness-raising activities and/or training for recruiters, employers, and workers can embed ILO Fair Recruitment Principles in practice, unions can provide rights-based content, while PES ensure institutional reach and government backing. Finally, trade unions and PES can cooperate within tripartite and regional forums to harmonize recruitment standards across borders, ensuring consistency and mutual accountability among origin and destination countries.

Question: What are the main obstacles to implementing the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, and how can public employment services help to overcome them?

Answer: Obstacles are multiple and vary greatly from the context. In some countries they relate the recruitment regulatory framework, including licencing and registration and prohibition of fees and costs to workers. Our global study suggests already 110 countries have some type of regulations of cost and fees, but most of them are still not fully aligned with ILO guidance and definition. But in our experience the biggest challenge relates to implementation and enforcement of relevant laws and policies. This has to do with low capacities of inspection authorities, which in many countries either have no mandate or low

capacity or to identify and address recruitment abuses and inspect private recruitment agencies.

Lack of transparency and reliable information mentioned by Ira is also a major issue and require, among other streamlining of processes and procedures and bilateral collaboration across countries- Thank you for pointing at the role of PES. For ILO fair recruitment is not just a matter related to private actors. Of course, private recruitment agencies play a very important and, in many countries, critical role, but so do. We hers earlier about the work done by PES in Kenya, which was inspiring. Fair recruitment is also about strong and efficient Public emp services that provide better services to migrant workers and collaborate with private agencies as promoted by C181. Again, for ILO fair recruitment is a critical process that pertains to the world of work and requires compliance with labour standards and participation of all actors of the real economy. ILO is best placed to provide support in this area. We work with PES to enhance their capacities to cater to migrant and refugees' needs in many countries.

ILO has just published a guide to private employment agencies, which I encourage you to review, here <https://www.ilo.org/publications/guide-private-employment-agencies> Drawing on ILO Conventions No. 181 and No. 88, the Guide emphasizes collaboration between public and private employment services. Strategic partnerships improve job matching, strengthen active labour market policies, and expand access to opportunities for those in vulnerable situations. Practical examples, from shared digital platforms to joint monitoring systems, show how cooperation enhances efficiency and fairness.