

Dear visitor,

The aim of this document is to give you a brief description of the Council's composition, its competences and its functioning.

Together with the Central Economic Council, the National Labour Council is traditionally called "the House of the Belgian social partners".

It is located in the heart of Brussels, near the European institutions.

The National Labour Council was created by an Act of 29 May 1952. Its composition and functioning were modified by the Act of 30 December 2009 containing various measures.

The National Labour Council is the successor of several bodies, the firsts of which were created at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the Labour Committee (instituted in 1886), the Industry and Labour Councils (in 1887), the High Labour Council (in 1892), and the Supreme Council of Labour and Social Provision (in 1935).

At the end of the Second World War, a more important role was allocated to the representatives of the social and economic world. The Central Economic Council was thus instituted in 1948, and the National Labour Council in 1952, following the Joint General Council that had been functioning since the end of 1944.

## **COMPOSITION**

The Chairman of the National Labour Council is Mr Rudi DELARUE.

The National Labour Council has 26 full members and 26 substitute members. They are nominated by royal decree. Their term of office is four years and can be renewed.

The seats are divided equally between the employers' and workers' organizations.

Only full members are entitled to vote.

Full members representing the workers' organizations	Full members representing the employers' organizations
Mr COPPENS Mario	Mr BOTTERMAN Christiaan
Mr DEBAENE Jean-Marie	Mr DE GOLS Michaël
Mr DECOCK Stefaan	Mr CABOOTER Koen
Ms DELMEE Myriam	Ms DEJONGHE Monica
Ms DUROI Hilde	Mr DEMARREE Serge
Mr SERROYEN Chris	Mr DEWEVRE Matthieu
Ms ULENS Miranda	Mr LAENENS Koen
Mr VALENTIN Olivier	Mr TIMMERMANS Pieter
Mr VAN DEN BERGH Piet	Mr VAN WALLEGHEM Philippe
Mr VAN ERDEGHEM William	Ms VANDERHOVEN Marie-Noëlle
Mr VANDER LINDEN Lander	Ms VERMEERSCH Catherine
Ms VERDOOT Caroline	Mr VERSCHRAEGEN Geert
Mr VERJANS Mathieu	Mr VOCHTEN Jan

## **COMPETENCES**

The Act of 29 May 1952 gives the following tasks to the National Labour Council:

- firstly, and most importantly, it delivers opinions and formulates propositions on social matters for the attention of the Belgian government and/or Parliament;
- secondly, and residually, it delivers opinions on jurisdictional disputes between joint committees.

Since the Act of 5 December 1968, it is also entitled to conclude collective agreements, either for all sectors of the economy or for one of these sectors.

Moreover, different laws state that it should deliver opinions or propositions before the adoption of their executing decrees; and this, in the field of individual and collective labour law (work duration, contracts of employment, protection of the remuneration, etc.) as well as in the field of social security law (social security liability, notion of remuneration subject to contributions, pensions, etc.).

## **FUNCTIONING**

The National Labour Council has a three-tier institutional structure: the Plenary Council, the Executive Board and the Committees.

It has a Secretariat, which is in charge of the logistics aspects.

### ➤ **Plenary Council**

The Council sits at least once per quarter, when convened by its Chairman. In practice, a meeting is held mostly every first Tuesday of each month.

This is when collective agreements are concluded and opinions and propositions are adopted.

For collective agreements, at least half of the members of each side should be present. Collective agreements may be concluded by the organizations that are represented by at least 90% of the members representing the employers and by at least 90% of the members representing the workers.

Opinions and propositions are in most cases unanimous. When no unanimity can be reached, the different positions are recorded in the texts.

### ➤ **Executive Board**

The Executive Board is established by the Council. It is composed of ten members: the Chairman, four vice-chairmen, four members equally chosen by the Council between the employers' and workers' representatives as well as the Secretary-General.

Its mission is to:

- decide on the agenda of the Council's activities;
- prepare the examination of the agenda points and define the procedure;
- see to it that the Council's decisions are executed;
- submit annual budget proposals to the Council.

It meets nearly each month.

The four vice-chairmen are currently:

- Ms ULENS Miranda (FGTB)
- Mr VERJANS Mathieu (CSC)
- Ms DEJONGHE Monica (FEB)
- Mr DEWEVRE Matthieu (UCM).

### ➤ **Committees**

The Council's actual work takes place in committees. Their missions are determined by the Bureau. Full and alternate members of the Council take part in these meetings and may be assisted by experts.

The following committees are usually always active:

- the Works Councils Committee
- the Individual Labour Relations Committee;
- the Collective Labour Relations Committee;
- the Social Security Committee;
- the International Labour Organization Committee.

Common problems are sometimes examined with the Central Economic Council in joint committees, where members of both councils and experts are invited.

➤ **The Secretariat**

In accordance with the Act of 29 May 1952, the necessary logistic support for the execution of the Council's missions is supplied by the Secretariat. The Secretariat is currently composed of about 40 officials who are appointed by the Council; the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General are appointed by the Crown.

Its role is to:

- guarantee the practical working of the Council;
- supply the necessary documentation for the Council's activities.

The Secretariat takes the minutes of the meetings, makes preparatory documents and prepares draft collective agreements, draft opinions and draft reports for the plenary Council meetings. It translates the documents in two of the national languages (French and Dutch). It also provides registry services, prints the documents, and ensures the administration of its personnel.

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