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Evaluation of the cooperation between the Norwegian and the Lithuanian Labour Inspectorates

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Preface

During the period 2019–2023 the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates have collaborated on several initiatives to promote decent work, strengthen tripartite cooperation, and combat work-related crime in both countries. The collaborative activities have been funded by the *Social Dialogue – Decent Work* programme under the Norway Grants.

The Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates have commissioned Samfunnsøkonomisk analyse AS (SØA) and Fafo to evaluate to what extent the collaboration has reached its intended objectives. Our evaluation is based on available documentation from the project, as well as in-depth interviews with participants.

We want to thank all our informants for taking the time to share useful information and their experiences with us through interviews. Furthermore, we would like to thank our clients in the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates for an interesting assignment, good cooperation and constructive feedback.

Oslo, 14. February 2024

Jørgen Ingerød Steen
Project leader
Samfunnsøkonomisk analyse AS

Summary

During the period 2019 to 2023, the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates have collaborated on six initiatives to promote decent work, strengthen tripartite cooperation, and combat work-related crime. The project has been funded under the *Social dialogue – Decent Work* programme from the Norway Grants, where Innovation Norway has been the programme operator.

The Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates have commissioned Economics Norway (SØA) and Fafo to evaluate to what extent the initiatives have reached their objectives. In addition, we were asked to evaluate the overall administration of the project. We have reviewed available documentation from the project and conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 20 participants from Norway and Lithuania. This report summarises our findings.

We have structured our evaluation of the initiatives into five groups:

1. Administration of the project.
2. Seminars for sharing knowledge and best practices.
3. Staff exchange for learning and assistance.
4. Joint authority cooperation.
5. The *Know Your Rights* campaign.

Overall, we find that most of the initiatives to a large degree have reached their original objectives. All of the participants we have interviewed are largely positive to the purpose of the project and the results that have been achieved. Most informants describe their own participation as both educating and inspirational for themselves, and they see opportunities for improving how their organisation performs. While there have been practical and legal challenges and obstacles along the way, our overall impression is that most of these have been resolved through constructive dialogue and cooperation.

While participants report large personal benefits and opportunities for their organisation, the project has not been able to meet all ambitions for cooperation. Our assessment is that future collaboration between the labour inspectorates should focus more on communicating the benefits of cooperation and mobilising other staff members to participate to a greater extent. Below we describe the contents and our findings related to the evaluation of each initiative in more detail.

Administration of the project

There are three levels of administration related to this project. Innovation Norway is the programme operator for the Norway Grants. Their role has been to oversee that the implementation and administration of the project is within the purpose of the programme. The overall administration of the project itself, has mostly fallen to two project coordinators in the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates respectively. These coordinators have reported to Innovation Norway and have had an overall responsibility to plan and ensure progress for the different initiatives.

Our interviews indicate that the overall dialogue between project coordinators in both countries, Innovation Norway and those responsible for the progress in each of the initiative have been constructive and good. All the interviewees have been impressed by the overall progress.

The major challenge regarding the administration was to ensure that the expenses incurred by the Norwegian labour inspectorate were reimbursed. While a workaround was made in the later stages of the project, it is still uncertain whether the Norwegian labour inspectorate will receive full reimbursement for earlier expenses. In addition, our assessment is that it is unfortunate that some of the annual learning seminars were cancelled. Even if there are good reasons for it, e.g., restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these seminars are important to evaluate progress and discuss necessary adaptations.

Our recommendations for administration of future cooperation are:

- Ensure that annual learning seminars are conducted, to evaluate progress and discuss necessary adaptations to the project and initiatives.
- Clarifying and resolving how reimbursements are to be handled early in the project.

Seminars for sharing knowledge and best practices.

Throughout the project there has been two seminars concerning the Nordic model for tripartite cooperation. The first tripartite seminar was held in Norway in 2019 while the second was held in Lithuania in 2024. There were participants from all the Nordic and Baltic countries at both seminars, who represented social partners, labour inspectorates, as well as public authorities and research institutes. The objectives of these seminars were to provide insight about how tripartite cooperation can promote decent work and social dialogue.

At the seminars there were presentations about tripartite cooperation in general, as well as practical examples from the transport and construction industries. Our interviews indicate that the seminars have successfully communicated and demonstrated the benefits of tripartite cooperation. However, many also point out that lower trade union density and different traditions for tripartite cooperation in Lithuania make it difficult to transfer some aspects of the Nordic model and experiences to the Lithuanian labour market. Our impression is that these factors somewhat reduce the participants' perceived relevance of this initiative. The second half of the 2024-seminar opened for discussions among corresponding organisations from the various countries, e.g., trade unions from both countries could discuss their work and challenges. Our interviews indicate that Lithuanian participants found this part of the seminar more valuable than the overall presentation of tripartite cooperation.

In addition to the tripartite seminars, there have been presentations at the annual learning seminars to share knowledge and best practices among participants. Central project members and leaders from the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates were regular attendees at these seminars, while other participants have varied throughout the project period. While the annual seminars are important for planning and evaluating progress, we question whether this is the correct arena for knowledge sharing. Most of the participants are involved in several other initiatives and can probably gain the same insight from other arenas.

Our recommendations for future cooperation on seminars for sharing knowledge and best practices:

- Make the tripartite seminars more relevant to all participants by focusing on topics that are more transferable to the other participating countries, rather than focusing on country specific structures that are less relevant to the other countries.
- Place more emphasis on administration, assessment of progress and planning future activities in the annual seminars. Less emphasis on learning and sharing of best practices. While these seminars are relevant for sharing knowledge, our assessment is that other arenas are probably more relevant to share knowledge with both participants in the project and other stakeholders.

Staff exchange for learning and assistance

Staff exchanges between the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates have been a major part of the project. There have been two types of staff exchanges, one for learning and one for assistance.

Staff exchanges for *learning* consisted of visits where inspectors were introduced to the inspection practices in the other country, through meetings and observations of real-life inspections. The focus point here was on two-way learning. It was emphasized that the inspectors from the visiting country should learn best practices and methods from the host country.

All our informants who participated in staff exchanges for learning express substantial learning outcomes. Inspectors from both countries described gaining new insights and perspectives from observing the methods and technologies used before, during, and after inspections in the respective countries. Our Lithuanian informants gave examples of how they have made some changes to their methods after the staff exchanges, e.g., changes in the questionnaire used during inspections. While our Norwegian informants were inspired by certain aspects of Lithuanian inspections, e.g., the use of technology and varied sanctioning options, they did not provide any examples of specific adaptations or changes in their methods. Some Norwegian informants were frustrated that it seems to be difficult to implement changes which are perceived to be beneficial to their work.

Staff exchanges for *assistance* consisted of active collaboration to inspect specific companies that were of interest, and where cooperation could improve the labour inspectorates' results. Concerted inspections refer to inspections carried out in two countries at the same time regarding related cases and is an example of assistance. The objective for staff exchanges for assistance was to make the inspections more effective by gathering and sharing information about the cases across borders and lay the ground for continuous cooperation after the project period.

Our informants report positive results from the staff exchanges for assistance that were carried out, as it enabled them to achieve results that could not be reached without cooperation. These experiences suggest that staff exchanges for assistance can strengthen the authorities' combat of work-related crime. However, the project has not reached the coordinators' ambitions for the total number of staff exchanges for assistance, and only a minority of our informants have utilised these relations afterwards.

Our interviews suggest that there has been mismatching expectations between coordinators and other staff members as to how staff exchanges for assistance should be initiated and organised, which may explain why the ambitions were not met. It seems that the project coordinators expected inspectors to take more initiative, while inspectors expected that the initiative to a larger degree would come from their managers. Some interviewees pointed out that increased use of the Internal Market Information System (IMI), where labour inspectorates can communicate and request documentation, may reduce the need for staff exchanges for assistance. If that is the case, the emphasis on increasing the number of staff exchanges should be weighted less.

Moreover, our impression is that staff exchange for assistance is more important to the Norwegian inspectorate than the Lithuanian, due to the fact that there are many Lithuanians working in Norway and not the other way around.

Our recommendations for future staff exchanges for learning and assistance:

- Conduct additional staff exchanges for learning, specifically observations of inspections, can contribute to increased transfer of knowledge and best practices.
- Placing a clearer emphasis on who joint inspections are expected to be initiated from in both countries to increase the scope of exchanges.
- Evaluate to what degree the use of IMI affects the need for and value from staff exchanges for assistance.
- For Norway: Having a stronger focus on implementing best practices from partnering countries that are relevant also in Norway.

Joint authority cooperation

The project has initiated bilateral joint authority cooperation between labour inspectorates and other national authorities. The objective of the joint authority activities was to strengthen Lithuanian fight against undeclared work by transferring the Norwegian model of cooperation on a national level and to establish a bilateral joint authority cooperation.

In the Norwegian model for joint authority cooperation, the Labour Inspection Authority, the police, the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and the Tax Administration cooperate in the combat against work-related crime. A lot of the cooperative activities are centred around eight labour crime centres located throughout the country.

The activities in this initiative have evolved over time. The initial steps were to set up a project group with representatives from both countries and to communicate strategic and organisational experiences of joint authority cooperation in Norway. In 2023 this materialised into a group where bilateral joint authority cooperation was put into practice, targeted at the transport sector. The last step was to establish practical cross-border joint authority activities and inspections in Norway and Lithuania, based on experiences from the Norwegian model for the labour crime centre. This materialised into a pilot for a new labour crime centre in Vilnius which will be operational in 2024.

The participants have assessed the transport group to be very successful, both with regards to educating participants and to concrete inspections. Our interviewees have pointed out that all participating authorities and individuals have shown significant flexibility to facilitate this initiative. It is too early to assess results and impacts of the labour crime centre in Vilnius, but having managed to start a pilot project of this magnitude in a relatively short period of time is considered to be a success in itself.

One challenge that our interviewees pointed to was that, especially in the beginning, some participants from partnering authorities did not understand their role in the initiative. Better communication and increased involvement from relevant partners at the initial stages of the joint authority cooperation may mitigate this challenge. This could also increase prioritisation of resources directed towards the joint authority cooperation from the other authorities and social partners.

Our recommendations for the joint authority cooperation for future projects are:

- Keep doing this type of initiatives. We need more time to observe effects of the pilot for the new labour crime centre in Vilnius.
- Better communication and increased involvement from relevant partners at the initial stages in the joint authority cooperation are needed.

The Know Your Rights campaign.

Know Your Rights is a communication campaign targeted at foreign workers who work in Norway. The campaign consisted of a webpage which presented information on rights and obligations in the workers' own language. The webpage was promoted with targeted advertisements on Facebook and on other webpages the target group are assumed to frequent.

The campaign's objective was to inform foreign workers about their rights and enable them to fulfil their obligations in the Norwegian labour market. When workers are better informed, they can contribute to Norwegian authorities' effort to prevent and reduce work-related crime.

The impact of *Know Your Rights* has been separately evaluated by Economics Norway in 2021. We concluded that the campaign to a large degree achieved its goals. It reached a large share of the target group, and users reported that the information was relevant, easy to understand, and many were motivated to improve their working conditions after seeing the campaign. In follow-up interviews with some of the same respondents in 2024, we found that many requested information on *how* they could act on the information they had got in the campaign.

Our recommendations for future cooperation on *Know Your Rights*:

- *Know Your Rights* consists of several elements, e.g. relevant platforms for reach and the use of plain language, which should be an inspiration for future collaboration.
- Provide users with more concrete information about how they can act upon the violations they discover at their workplace.

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1 Introduction

During the period 2019 to 2023, the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates have collaborated on several activities to promote decent work and strengthen tripartite cooperation. Recent developments in both the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour markets are an important part of the rationale for bilateral collaboration.

More than 30 000 Lithuanians were employed and resided in Norway in 2022, which is more than three times as many compared to 2010 (SSB, 2024). Lithuanians are now the second largest group of foreign workers in Norway, after the Polish.

Labour immigration to Lithuania has also increased significantly in later years. More than 70 000 temporary residence permits and visas on the ground of employment were issued in 2022 (EMN, 2023). The number of issued permits and visas has more than doubled since 2017.

The labour inspectorates' collaboration has been funded by the *Social Dialogue – Decent Work* programme under the Norway Grants. The objective of the Grants is to contribute to a more equal Europe, both economically and socially, and strengthened bilateral relations between Norway, Lichtenstein, and Iceland, and 15 Beneficiary States in Europe.¹

The Lithuanian and Norwegian labour inspectorates have commissioned Economics Norway (SØA) and Fafo to evaluate the impacts of the joint activities. This report accounts for our findings.

In this chapter we start by presenting the objective of the report, before we describe our methodological approach to the evaluation.

1.1 We evaluate the impacts of six collaborative initiatives

The Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates have cooperated on several different initiatives throughout the last five years. The main goals of the collaborative efforts have been to share knowledge, best practices, learn from each other and to practically collaborate to promote decent work and combat work-related crime.

We evaluate the impacts of six initiatives, as well as the overall administration of the collaboration:

1. The *Know Your Rights* campaign.
2. Tripartite seminar in Norway in 2019.
3. Annual learning seminars.
4. Staff exchange for learning
5. Staff exchange for assistance – collaboration on specific inspections.
6. Joint authority activities – interdepartmental bilateral cooperation.

The collaboration has been administered at several levels. At the highest level, Innovation Norway provides funding and ensures that the collaborative initiatives are within the objectives of the *Social Dialogue – Decent Work* programme under the Norway Grants. Within the collaborative project, coordinators from both countries have had an administrative role across all the initiatives. To a varying degree the administration of each initiative has been delegated to other staff. The annual learning seminars have been important arenas to administrate and evaluate yearly progress in the project.

The main objective of the tripartite seminar in 2019 and staff exchange for learning has been to share knowledge and best practices, and to establish personal relations to facilitate future collaboration. The

¹ These are Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia,

and Slovenia. No agreement reached with Hungary for the period 2014-2021.

annual learning seminars have also been an important facilitating initiative.

The *Know Your Rights* campaign, staff exchange for assistance and joint authority activities are more operatively oriented initiatives, where the objective has been to carry out specific inspections, collaboration, and communication activities.

While each initiative can be analysed independently, some of them are more closely related than others. For analytical purposes, we have grouped the initiatives in five groups:

1. Administration of the project.
2. Seminars for sharing knowledge and best practices.
3. Staff exchange for learning and assistance.
4. Joint authority activities.
5. The *Know Your Rights* campaign.

We describe the objectives, contents, and our evaluation of the impacts of each group in the subsequent chapters.

1.2 Methodological approach

For each of the six initiatives, the objective of the evaluation has been to analyse aspects related to the following three aspects:

1. How was the concept conceived of?
2. To what extent did the initiative attain its original goals?
3. What should prospective new efforts in the cooperation comprise of?

We use a combination of OECD's evaluation criteria and intervention logic as a framework to evaluate the impacts of each initiative in the collaboration.

OECD's framework consists of six criteria:

- **Relevance:** Is the intervention doing the right things?
- **Coherence:** How well does the intervention fit?
- **Effectiveness:** Is the intervention achieving its objectives?
- **Efficiency:** How well are resources being used?
- **Impact:** What difference does the intervention make?
- **Sustainability:** Will the benefits last?

There are two principles for using the criteria. The first principle is that the criteria should be applied thoughtfully and contextualised to fit the needs for each specific evaluation. The second principle states that the use and emphasis of each criterion depends on the purpose of the evaluation. In this evaluation we focus particularly on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency criteria.

We use intervention logic as a conceptual framework to systemise possible and expected outcomes for each initiative. Therefore, it is useful for the reader of this report to have a foundational understanding of this framework.

The intervention logic framework consists of five elements to systemise expected causal relationships related to the programme:

1. **Context:** The bilateral cooperation between the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates.
2. **Activity:** The specific initiatives in the project.
3. **Result:** Immediate and direct results of the activity.
4. **User impact:** Benefits of the activity and results for involved parties.
5. **Social impact:** Long-term benefits of the initiative on a societal level.

In the following chapters, we have constructed an intervention logic for each activity, to evaluate the

achieved outcomes. The value of the intervention logic is that it clarifies central relationships and questions that must be covered in the evaluation.

Empirically, our evaluation is based on a review of available documents regarding the project and 20 in-depth interviews with participants from different authorities in Norway and Lithuania. Some interviewees had participated in initiatives more than a year ago, which limited some of their recollection.

2 Administration of the project

The main objective for the administration of the project has been to ensure efficient and targeted initiatives and to manage stakeholder satisfaction. The project has been administered at three main levels.

At the highest level, the cooperation is administered as a programme funded by the Norway Grants, where Innovation Norway was the programme operator. Planning and deciding on which initiatives to pursue was mainly organised by two project coordinators in the labour inspectorates in Norway and Lithuania. The administration and organisation of the specific initiatives were often delegated to other staff members in both countries.

The project faced two major amendments during the project period. First, covid meant that certain activities had to be cancelled and postponed. Second, a large portion of the money allocated to the project was not spent. Amendments were handled through constructive dialogue and flexible cooperation throughout the project period.

Our overall impression is that most of the initiatives in the project were inspired by the Norwegian models for tripartite cooperation and joint authority activities. However, the administrative burden related to organising the actual implementation of each initiative was shared across both countries.

2.1 Three levels of administration

The cooperative initiatives to be evaluated are funded by the Norway Grants.² The grants represent Norway's contributions to reduce economic and social disparities in Europe and to strengthen bilateral relations between Norway and the beneficiary states. Funds are targeted towards fifteen countries, mainly in Eastern Europe, whose Gross

National Income per capita is less than 90 per cent of the EU average (EEA Grants, 2023).

Each beneficiary country has a National Focal Point, most often a ministry, which has the overall responsibility of the Grants. Each country also has several programme operators responsible for making the funding available to applicants through calls for proposals, appraising applications, selecting, and monitoring projects (EEAGrants.org, 2024).

This project is part of Norway Grants' Programme no. 5 *Social dialogue – Decent Work* for the period 2014-2021, which among other things, has a focus on the benefits of decent work and challenges regarding work-related crime. Among the suggested measures are institutional capacity building and training, cooperation between labour inspectorates, social partners, and other relevant regulatory bodies (Regjeringen, 2019).

According to the call for project proposals in Lithuania, Norwegian entities were only eligible as applicants in partnership with at least one legal entity established in Lithuania. The role of any Norwegian applicant, project promotor and project partner were to contribute to ensuring social dialogue and decent work in Lithuania (Innovation Norway, 2018).

The Lithuanian-Norwegian cooperation for decent work started in 2019. Its overall objective was to promote decent working conditions for workers, fair competition for companies and sustainable welfare systems by performing inspections, sharing good practices and information in close cooperation between the labour inspectorates.

² The Norway Grants are funded by Norway alone. In addition, there are EEA Grants, which are jointly funded by Iceland, Lichtenstein, and Norway.

2.1.1 Programme level

Innovation Norway has been given different roles under the EEA and Norway Grants. For some partner countries Innovation Norway directly operates the funds. For other countries Innovation Norway only acts as an advisor and partner. All projects should have Norwegian partners.

Innovation Norway is the fund operator and has managed the bilateral cooperation project between Norway and Lithuania. In the negotiations, € 650 000 were earmarked for cooperation between the two countries' labour inspectorates. Moreover, Innovation Norway has been actively involved in developing the project. Their role is to offer technical assistance, and to oversee the implementation and administration. Furthermore, the partners are obliged to report to the agency, and Innovation Norway has conducted spot checks throughout the project period.

According to one informant, Innovation Norway has also participated in some of the activities, like the initial tripartite seminar. An important goal is to contribute to capacity building for authorities in both countries and to promote tripartite cooperation. Our informant emphasised that the main purpose was to build Lithuanian authorities' capacity to promote decent work and combat work-related crime. However, other informants have emphasised the mutual learning opportunities related to the project.

Our informants have pointed to some challenges related to different political and administrative culture. Moreover, language sometimes constituted barriers to cooperation, in addition to some inherited bureaucracy and certain processes in Lithuania.

Lithuania is the beneficiary country under the EEA grants, and thus the intended receiver of funding. Due to the nature of the initiatives, most of the expenses have been carried by the Norwegian labour

inspectorate. This means that for the Norwegian labour inspectorate to get paid they had to invoice the Lithuanian labour inspectorate.

This has presented certain challenges as it proved rather cumbersome and difficult for the Lithuanians to produce these invoices in the correct way. Hence, a substantial part of the money has never been paid out from Innovation Norway, which means that the Norwegian labour inspectorate has not been able to be reimbursed for their expenses from the Lithuanian labour inspectorate.

A workaround has been made in the later stages of the project, so that Innovation Norway can pay the funds directly to the Norwegian labour inspectorate. However, it is uncertain whether the Norwegian labour inspectorate will receive full reimbursements for expenses from earlier years, due to time-limits. This problem is not finalized completely yet and hence we do not know how it will end up yet. However, based on both document review and interviews, it is our impression that this problem has caused a bit of a headache for the coordinators and has not been easy to solve.

2.1.2 Coordinator level

The overall administration of the project is conducted at the coordinator level in the Lithuanian and Norwegian labour inspectorates. Monthly meetings have been held between the leaders of the project from both countries throughout the project period. These meetings were mostly held digitally. In addition, annual learning seminars have played a central role related to planning and administrating the specific collaborative initiatives, see chapter 3.2.

The overall administration of the project included deciding which initiatives that should be prioritised in the period ahead. The decisions are based on mutual agreements, and experiences from earlier initiatives.

2.1.3 Initiative level

When the overall administration of the project had concluded on which initiatives to prioritise, the administration of the specific initiative was typically delegated to other staff members in each country.

2.2 The initiatives were mainly inspired by Norwegian experiences

The labour inspectorates in Lithuania and Norway were relatively free to design the collaboration and how the available funding should be distributed. Ideas for the collaborative initiatives in the project were all founded on the formulated purposes of the *Social dialogue – decent work* programme:

- Institutional capacity-building and training
- Cooperation between social dialogue organisations
- Cooperation between labour inspectorates and other regulatory bodies

Source: EEA Grants (2019).

We clearly observe how the tripartite seminar relates to cooperation between social dialogue organisations, while the joint authority activities are intended to strengthen cooperation between labour inspectorates and other regulatory bodies. Our assessment is that all the initiatives support institutional capacity-building and training.

All the initiatives that were carried out throughout the project were centrally decided at the coordinator level and then made more specific at the initiative level. Our interviews suggest that the initiatives were mostly conceived by Norwegian participants and approved in close cooperation with their Lithuanian counterparts. Our interviewees point to several reasons for this dynamic.

First and foremost, the Norwegian government, including the Norwegian labour inspectorate, has for

several years worked strategically with both social dialogue and joint authority cooperation to reduce labour market crime and promote decent working conditions.

Interviews with participants of the international cooperation from Lithuania indicate that learning about joint authority cooperation was their main interest going into the international cooperation. Lithuanian authorities wished to learn about how to facilitate joint authority cooperation, to improve the working conditions in their own labour market.

The large number of Lithuanians working in Norway was also a motivation for bilateral cooperation in both countries. From the Lithuanian side, improving working conditions for Lithuanians abroad is an important task.

2.3 The administrative burden was shared between the two countries

The participants have encountered practical, bureaucratic, and legal issues in both countries throughout the project period. While some activities were postponed and others cancelled, the general impression is that most of these obstacles have been addressed and solved during the project.

The Lithuanian authorities described in interviews how it is difficult for them to invite participants from other authorities to exchanges or meetings abroad. They have to send official invites and it generally takes quite a bit of time. The Norwegian side also reports of bureaucratic issues regarding cooperation across authorities, mostly related to a lack of understanding of each other's rules and regulations. This has been especially challenging in order to conduct joint inspections in Norway.

As mentioned above, there have been some administrative issues regarding payment of funds to and from Lithuania. This resulted in one staff exchange

being postponed, due to lack of funding. This incident took place right before the covid-19 pandemic hit, which resulted in cancelation of this specific staff exchange.

The covid-19 pandemic meant that the administrative team had to be flexible and change the project accordingly during the project period. The same demands were placed when a large portion of the allocated funds were not spent. Our interviewees point out that all participating organisations and individuals have shown great flexibility to facilitate necessary amendments to original plans.

While the administrative burden of the project has been shared across both countries, our impression

is that that Norwegian labour inspectorate has taken a leading role. Most of the seminars and staff exchanges have taken place in Norway.

For the Lithuanian labour inspectorate, it has been more difficult to find relevant participants from both their own organisation and from other authorities to participate in the different initiatives. In addition, the Lithuanian labour inspectorate has a significantly smaller organisation and fewer resources. Hence, relative to administrative capacity, the administrative burden has been more equally distributed. None of our informants observed or perceived any negative effects about how the administrative burdens were divided on the outcome of the project.

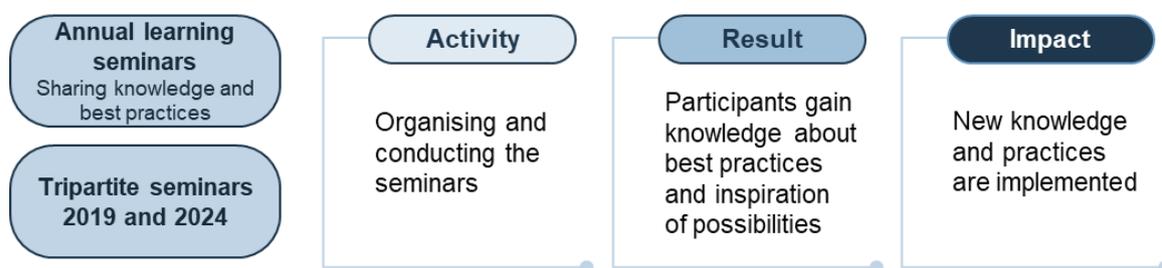
3 Seminars for sharing knowledge and best practices

The main goals for the tripartite seminars in Norway in 2019 and Vilnius in 2024, as well as the knowledge-sharing activities in the annual learning seminars, have been to share knowledge and best practices between Norwegian and Lithuanian authorities and social partners. The intended impact is that appropriate new knowledge and practices are implemented, and to promote decent work, social

dialogue and future cross-border collaboration, see figure 3.1.

In this chapter, we present our findings regarding the results and impacts of the tripartite seminars in 2019 and 2024, and the knowledge-sharing activities that has been a part of the two annual learning seminars in the project.

Figure 3.1 Illustration of the intervention logic for the project's initiatives related to knowledge sharing



Source: SØA

3.1 Tripartite seminars in 2019 and 2024

The first tripartite seminar took place in Norway in March 2019, while the second was held in Vilnius in January 2024. At both tripartite seminars there were participants from Norway and Lithuania, as well as from other Nordic and Baltic countries. The participants represented social partners, labour inspectorates, as well as public authorities and research institutes.

The goal for the tripartite seminars was to provide insight in the tripartite cooperation between social partners and the authorities, and specifically how the “Nordic model” for tripartite cooperation can promote decent work and social dialogue.

3.1.1 Activity

The tripartite seminar in 2019 was held over two days in Norway. The contents were focused on tripartite cooperation in general, and examples of spe-

cific applications in the transport sector and construction industry.

Participants from Norway included the social partners, among others the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, and the Research Institute Fafo. From Lithuania, representatives from the State Labour Inspectorate, the National Road Carriers, the Construction Association, the Industry Trade Union’s Federation, as well as the Carriers’ Trade Union participated.

The first day of the tripartite seminar was a general introduction to the Norwegian model and the tripartite cooperation at its core. The second day of the seminar focused on tripartite cooperation and working conditions in the Norwegian transportation and construction industries.

Presentations concerning the transport industry, included information about the tripartite sector program in the transport sector, the work of the Norwegian Road Transport Association (NFL), PostNord, the Labour Inspection Authority's activities and joint inspections³ in the industry, and the work of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration (NPRA).

During the seminar, the Labour Inspection Authority initiated a discussion among the participants on the nature of their collaboration with other transport organisations, with other authorities, and whether they collaborate with inspection and supervisory authorities in other countries.

The presentation on construction was introduced by the construction and real estate development company Backe, on cooperation from the employers' view, followed by the Norwegian United Federation of Trade Unions, who's largest share of members work in the iron, metal, and shipbuilding industry, as well as the building and construction sector. The federation presented issues such as local and central agreements, negotiation, meeting points, and trust at all levels to achieve successful cooperation.

The 2024 tripartite seminar took place in Vilnius, as a one-day seminar in January. According to interviews, the content was quite similar to the seminar held in 2019. The participants were representatives from trade unions, employers' organizations, and labour inspectorates from all the Baltic and Nordic countries. The seminar was split in two parts.

The first half of the day consisted of presentations from each country about how they work to fight undeclared work and their practice of social dialogue. According to interviews, it was apparent that there are significant differences between how cooperation between the social partners works in the Nordic and

Baltic countries, mainly due to the strength of the trade unions. The Nordic countries have much higher membership rates than the Baltic countries, hence trade unions have a stronger position in the Nordic countries. Both union density and long traditions for collaboration are factors that have strengthened tripartite cooperation in the Nordic countries.

The other countries also shared their best practices of cooperation between social partners. In Lithuania they have a labour dispute commission, which acts as a pre-trial dispute settlement body for individual labour disputes, is able to quickly solve issues between employers and employees. This is viewed as a big advantage compared to Norway where these cases are solved in private law cases.

The second half of the day, the groups split up and they talked to their corresponding organisations from the other countries. This was described as more interesting to the participants compared to the first half. Here, the organizations could discuss more concrete actions to improve social dialogue. The groups then presented their discussions.

3.1.2 Results

The main objective of the tripartite seminar was to promote the advantages of cooperation between authorities and social partners.

Based on our interviews with participants from the 2019-seminar, our impression is that the participants found the seminar insightful. Participants from both countries report that they had several learning points, and the Lithuanian participants thought it was interesting to hear about the Nordic tripartite model.

From the 2024-seminar, the discussion among corresponding organisations from the various countries

³ The police, the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, the Norwegian Tax Administration, and customs.

seems to have been especially valuable for participants from Lithuania. For example, participants from trade unions discussed how to increase membership rates to strengthen unions.

Our informants have pointed to the presentation of the Lithuanian labour dispute commission as very inspiring from a Norwegian perspective, which can be viewed as a separate result of the seminar.

Our overall impression is that the seminars have successfully introduced aspects of the Nordic model for tripartite cooperation. However, several interviewees have pointed out that it is difficult to transfer many aspects of the Nordic model to the Baltic countries, since both societies and labour markets differ significantly. While knowledge about tripartite cooperation has been transferred, most aspects of this model is not necessarily relevant to be implemented in the Baltic countries in the short term. On the other hand, participants may be able to implement aspects that are relevant.

In addition, our informants emphasise that the discussions among corresponding organisations in the different countries was useful. These discussions may generate longer-term results, for example on unionisation. That type of results will not be observable in this study since the time-perspective of the study is not long enough to observe this kind of change.

3.1.3 Impact

Our results suggest that the seminars successfully communicated benefits of and how tripartite cooperation is organised in the Nordic countries. It has emphasised how national authorities can utilise social partners to promote decent work and combat work-related crime. From a Norwegian perspective, learning about the Lithuanian labour dispute committee was emphasised as very inspiring.

While knowledge-transfer has been achieved, it is difficult to identify any broader impacts of the tripartite seminars at this point. Several Lithuanian informants have pointed out that lower unionisation makes it difficult to transfer experiences and methods from the Nordic countries. And while the labour dispute committee is interesting to our Norwegian informants, we have not got any information about whether it is possible or desirable to establish something similar in Norway.

3.2 Annual learning seminars

The learning seminars were arranged annually to discuss progress, formulating plans for the coming year, and sharing good practices. Central project members and leaders from the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates were regular attendees, while other participants have varied throughout the project period.

3.2.1 Activity

The first learning seminar took place in November 2020 and was held digitally, due to travel restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. There were six participants from each country, all from the countries' respective labour inspectorates.

The second seminar took place physically in Vilnius, at the end of March 2021, with slightly fewer participants. This time there were three representatives from Lithuania and three from Norway. Again, all the representatives were from the countries' labour inspectorates.

During the total project period, there should have been 3-4 annual learning seminars. However, mostly due to difficulties related to the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been conducted only two seminars.

The learning seminars consisted of one theoretical, one practical, and one social part. During the theoretical part, matters like working methodologies, organisation, and legislations were discussed. During the practical part, the parties participated in inspections concerning social dumping. The social part could be a dinner with all the participants or the like.

During the learning seminars, the host country would hold presentations on topics concerning how they combat work-related crime. The topics that were presented were tailored to fit the goals and ambitions of the overall project.

In Norway, the presentations were mostly about joint authority cooperation since this was the primary topic of interest to the Lithuanians. The Lithuanians presented their methods and technology used during inspections, for instance the use of drones, body cameras, and data registers, and how they sanctioned violations, and gathered intelligence through social media.

Additionally, the meetings contained a discussion and evaluation of the progress of each of the initiatives which had taken place during the year that passed and planned for the year ahead.

3.2.2 Results

The results of the annual learning seminars are mainly related to whether the project team managed to complete the activities that were agreed upon at the previous annual learning seminar. However, we also base the evaluation of the results of the learning seminars on the experience the participants have of the outcome.

Meetings in the coordinator group are necessary to facilitate such a big project, and hence the seminars may have been useful even if the goals and ambitions are not completely reached.

By comparing the notes from the two seminars and based on information from interviews, we can get a grasp of the degree to which the goals from the 2020 seminar were attained during 2021.

The minutes from 2021 indicate that the pandemic had limited the activities. Our impression is that there were high ambitions for activities in 2021, based on the 2020 learning seminar. Specifically, we observe that the number of exchanges was lower than intended. However, the pandemic is an important explanation for the discrepancy.

The question one must ask is whether the project coordinators handled the challenges that Covid-19 presented in a good way and how well they managed to increase the activity level once the pandemic allowed for travels.

Our impression from interviews is that the activity level rose drastically in 2022 and 2023. The result was that some of the tasks that were not accomplished in 2020 and 2021 were conducted in 2022 and 2023. However, since there was no annual learning seminar in 2023 or the beginning of 2024, it is difficult to review how the coordinators evaluated the progress of the initiatives during these years.

We did ask our interviewees about their perceptions on the results of the annual learning seminars. Informants from both countries describe the dialogue during the meetings as good. They also describe the annual learning seminars as a good arena to share knowledge and best practices, as well as to discuss, evaluate, and plan initiatives, which were important for the overall progress of the project.

3.2.3 Impact

Our assessment is that the annual learning seminars have been necessary to ensure and evaluate the progress of the project, as well as for each initi-

ative. The annual seminars also provided an arena for adjusting goals and resource allocations, depending on progress and relevance. This has contributed to the efficiency of the project. However, this emphasises potential issues related to conducting fewer of these seminars than originally intended. Conducting annual learning seminars to the progress of active initiatives and to plan future initiative should be a focus point for future collaboration.

Our interviewees describe benefits from sharing knowledge and best practices in the annual learning seminar as well. However, we question whether this is the most relevant arena for these activities. Most of the regular participants in the annual learning seminars are already involved across many initiatives, and we assume they have a relatively broad overview of these topics already. These resources may be utilised more efficiently in other learning and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

4 Staff exchange for learning and assistance

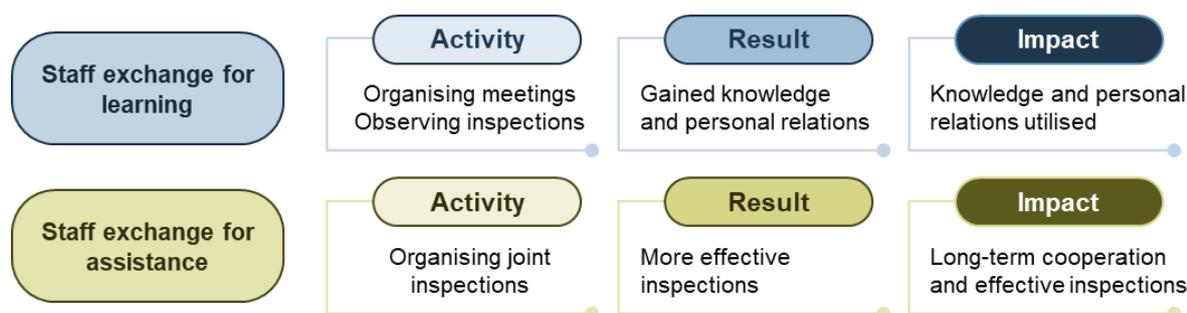
Staff exchanges have been central in the collaboration between the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates. Throughout the project, two different forms of staff exchanges have taken place.

Staff exchange for *learning* has consisted of visits where inspectors have been introduced to the inspection practices of the other country, holding an observer role. The focus point here was on two-way learning. It was emphasized that the inspectors from the visiting country should learn best practices and

methods from the host country. During staff exchange for *assistance*, inspectors actively collaborated on specific joint inspections that were of interest to both countries' labour inspectorates. A major goal for the staff exchanges were that the cross-border cooperation among inspectors would continue, irrespective of the future of the overall project.

Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the intended activities, results, and impacts related to staff exchanges for learning and assistance.

Figure 4.1 Illustration of the intervention logic for the project's initiatives related to staff exchange.



Source: SØA

4.1 Staff exchange for learning

Staff exchanges for learning revolve around exchanges of inspectors where the focus was on exchanging strategies, methods, and practices employed before, during, and after carrying out inspections. Furthermore, the exchange was intended to establish personal relations to facilitate future, self-initiated, cross-border cooperation among inspectors from both countries.

4.1.1 Activities

The staff exchanges for learning took place in both Norway and Lithuania. Inspectors visited the other country for two to three days. Typically, the first day would be dedicated to meetings and presentations of approaches and experiences from the host coun-

try's inspectors. The remaining time was set aside for the visiting inspectors to participate in real-life inspections as observers, as well as social activities.

The enterprises that were inspected were not of specific interest to the visiting inspectors, as the objective was to learn *how* the other country's labour inspectorate carries out an inspection. This includes who the inspectors talk to, what questions they ask, what documents and circumstance they check for, and what tools they use.

The participating inspectors were invited and selected by the coordinator in each country. The interviewees' perceptions are mostly that it is often the same Norwegian inspectors who are interested in participating in staff exchanges. Several of the inter-

viewees mentioned that language barriers, familial obligations, and other factors could affect the motivation and opportunity to participate. On the other hand, information from our Lithuanian interviewees suggests that there has been a relatively broad interest among inspectors to participate. However, language seems to be an important barrier.

While Lithuanian inspectors were supposed to have an observational role during these inspections, our impression is that many of them assisted with translating and interpreting communication between the Norwegian inspectors and Lithuanian workers they encountered. Many Norwegian informants described this assistance as very positive.

4.1.2 Results

All the interviewees who participated in staff exchange for learning, express substantial learning outcomes from participating. Inspectors from both countries describe gaining new insights and perspectives from observing the methods and technologies used before, during, and after inspections by the other country's inspectors. There is also relatively broad consensus among the interviewees that the staff-exchanges have facilitated individual cross-border relations between the inspectors that can and/or will facilitate future collaboration between the inspectorates.

Host inspectors from both countries inform us that the visiting inspectors were interested in both observing and learning. Many projected their interest by asking several follow-up questions to gain a better understanding. The Lithuanian inspectors that were invited to participate were all proficient in English, which the Norwegian inspectors described as important for the success of the exchanges.

During exchanges in Lithuania, the Lithuanian inspectors especially showcased how they wear body cameras during inspections and used drones to cre-

ate overview of worksites before and during inspections. None of these technologies are used by the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority as of now, and several of the Norwegian inspectors describe the use of these technologies with fascination and see the potential to improve their own inspections.

Several of the Norwegian inspectors also perceive that Lithuanian legislation grants the Lithuanian labour inspectorate more power than what is the case in Norway. For instance, several of the Norwegian inspectors pointed out the opportunity Lithuanian inspectors to issue fines and other sanctions on the spot, which seems to be efficient.

Inspectors from Lithuania describe their participation as both valuable and informative. They describe how each exchange was followed up by a review of practices that might be useful to implement in Lithuania. One example is the inclusion of new questions in the questionnaires that are used during inspections. The requirement to carry OSH-cards among workers at construction sites was also used as an example of practices Lithuanian inspectors noted while participating in staff exchanges for learning.

4.2 Staff exchange for assistance

Staff exchange for assistance consists of joint inspections of companies that are of interest to both the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorate, also labelled as concerted inspections. This initiative revolves around specific "hot cases", where the inspection is performed as a cooperation between inspectors from both countries.

Lithuanian law states that foreign inspectors can perform their competences while participating in joint inspections taking place in Lithuania (Alsos et al., 2023). Lithuanian inspectors do not have this right when they participate in concerted inspections

in Norway. Hence, Lithuanian inspectors' role is limited by the Norwegian legislation.

4.2.1 Activities

Unlike staff exchange for learning, these concerted inspections were planned in collaboration between the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates. In all instances, they chose the companies that were to be inspected in advance, ensuring that the companies were of relevance to both the Norwegian and Lithuanian labour inspectorates. The joint inspections were carried out in different industries, for example in the agriculture industry in Lofoten and in the construction industry in Klaipeda.

There have been fewer staff exchanges for assistance than the original ambitions for the initiative. As a result, resources that were earmarked for this initiative have not been spent. Some of our interviewees have pointed to the Covid-19 pandemic as one cause of the discrepancy.

However, our impression is that there has been a mismatch in expectations as to how additional staff exchanges for assistance were to be initiated. While the project coordinators have tried to delegate the responsibility to inspectors, most inspectors seem to have awaited invitations from their managers.

The project coordinators' ambitions for additional staff exchanges for assistance may have been too high. Some of the inspectors we have talked to said that this was a new form of cooperation, and that they thought they had achieved a lot with the inspections that were carried out.

4.2.2 Results

Our informants, from both countries, describe their experiences from the staff exchanges for assistance as valuable. Interviewees express that cooperating on the same case across borders makes it possible

to obtain information that would not be available within the single country. This facilitates more effective inspections in both countries.

None of the Lithuanian inspectors expressed having experienced any issues when bringing Norwegian inspectors along on their inspections in Lithuania, and all companies that were inspected acted in a cooperative manner. The Norwegian inspectors also report that the cooperation with Lithuanian inspectors worked well.

One example of the benefits of staff exchange for assistance was during an inspection of a group of Lithuanian employment agencies which operated in Norway. Norwegian inspectors had struggled to attain necessary documentation. With assistance from the Lithuanian labour inspectorate, they were able to document several violations regarding wages and working hours, which lead to sanctions targeted at the firms. These results would not have been achieved without the cross-border cooperation among the labour inspectorates.

While conducted staff exchanges for assistance seem to make inspections more effective, there may be a challenge related to communicating the effects across borders. The Lithuanian inspectors we interviewed did not know the outcome of the cases where they assisted Norwegian inspectors. This may negatively affect how inspectors perceive the value of staff exchange for assistance.

Two of the Lithuanian inspectors we interviewed, informed us that they have had informal communication with foreign inspectors from Norway and other countries after having participated in joint inspections. This informal communication may concern inquiries about whether further investigation and a more formal request for documentation about a foreign company in a specific case is purposeful or not. The Internal Market Information System (IMI), an

online platform which facilitates the exchange of information between public authorities in the EU, seems to be the most important communication channel for these formal requests (European Commission, 2024).

In addition to making inspections more effective, interviewees point out the staff exchange for assistance also involved a significant amount of learning and knowledge sharing amongst the inspectors.

4.3 Impact of staff exchanges for learning and assistance

Our informants have emphasised large benefits from participating in staff exchange for learning, both personally and for respective organisations. Lithuanian inspectors have provided examples of how staff exchanges have led to specific changes in their methods, e.g. changes in the questionnaire they use during inspections.

It is our impression from interviews with Lithuanian inspectors that the largest benefits of the staff exchanges are associated with learning from sharing knowledge and best practices across borders. This probably relates to the fact that, while there are differences, inspections are conducted relatively similarly across the borders.

While our Norwegian informants were inspired by certain aspects of Lithuanian inspections, e.g. the use of technology and their sanctioning options, they did not provide any examples of specific adaptations or changes in their methods. Some Norwegian informants were frustrated that it seems to be difficult to implement changes which are perceived to be beneficial to their work. We have not been able to identify the exact reasons through this evaluation. Based on our interviewees both legal, bureaucracy and culture may be relevant barriers, however we need more information to conclude.

Regarding the staff exchanges for assistance, there are examples of cases where the inspections have been more effective because of cross-border cooperation. However, the project has not reached the coordinators' ambitions for the total number of staff exchanges for assistance.

A major goal for the project was that the staff exchanges would facilitate future cooperation, irrespective of whether the collaborative project continues. There is a consensus among our informants that staff exchanges have established cross-border relations. However, only a minority of our informants have utilised these relations, and the number of additional staff exchanges for assistance so far suggests that this goal has not been achieved.

Results from specific cases and our informants' experiences indicate that the staff exchange for assistance create results and should be pursued further. Our analysis suggests that more clearly communicating how staff exchanges for assistance can and should be initiated by inspectors may increase the use. Some interviewees have pointed out that increased use of IMI may reduce the need for staff exchanges, as inspectors may be able to attain necessary information through the platform. If that is the case, then emphasis on increasing the number of staff exchanges for assistance should be weighted less. However, the use of IMI does not facilitate personal relations and learning in the same way.

A question is whether joint inspections are mostly of interest to the Norwegian labour inspectorate, as there are more Lithuanian workers and firms operating in Norway than the other way around. This may explain why the Norwegian coordinators have been more concerned about their inspectors' initiating exchanges for assistance than the Lithuanian coordinators. It is not necessarily a problem, as cooperation seem to positively affect conditions for Lithuanian workers in both Norway and Lithuania.

5 Joint authority cooperation

The project has initiated bilateral joint authority cooperation, which is intended to increase interdepartmental cooperation within each country and across borders. As illustrated in figure 5.1, the activities related to this initiative includes national and bilateral cooperation between different authorities.

The original objective of the joint authority activities was to strengthen Lithuanian fight against undeclared work by transferring strategic and organisational experiences from the Norwegian model of joint authority cooperation on a national level to Lithuanian authorities.

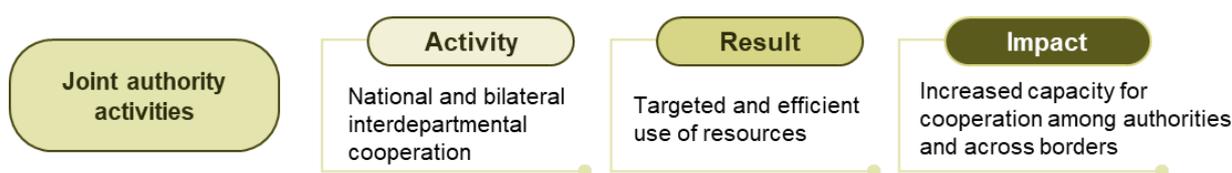
In the Norwegian model for joint authority cooperation, the labour inspectorate, the police, the Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) and the Tax Administration cooperate in the combat against work-related crime. A lot of the cooperative activities are centred around eight labour crime centres located in cities throughout the country.

This initiative was allowed to evolve over time. The initial steps were to set up a project group with representatives from both countries and to communicate strategic and organisational experiences of joint authority cooperation from Norwegian to Lithuanian authorities.

The last step was to establish practical cross-border joint authority activities and inspections in Norway and Lithuania, based on experiences from the Norwegian model for the labour crime centre. These inspections were different from the other staff exchange initiative because they involved other cooperating authorities.

The intended long-term impact of this initiative is increased capacity to combat national and cross-border work-related crime and violations in both Norway and Lithuania.

Figure 5.1 Illustration of the intervention logic for the project's initiatives related to joint authority cooperation



Source: SØA

5.1 Activities

In each country, a national project group consisting of 1-2 representatives from relevant authorities was formed, to improve cooperation between Lithuanian authorities. The involved authorities are social services (NAV and Sodra), tax authorities, labour inspectorate, and the police in both countries. In Lith-

uania, the state border control and financial crime investigation services were also involved.

The project group planned the joint authority activities and have been responsible for keeping track of progress throughout the project.

Several seminars were held in conjunction with the joint authority cooperation. The seminars were held

to facilitate conversations and the exchange of information and ideas amongst the representatives from each country. The idea was to showcase best practices and ways of working that could inspire the representatives from the other country.

The first meeting between project groups from both Lithuania and Norway was held in December 2020. It was held digitally due to the pandemic. During this first meeting, the group agreed on several seminars and activities to be performed in 2021. Most of these were delayed due to the pandemic.

The seminars had the purpose of introducing the representatives from the two countries to each other and their respective ways of working. The Norwegians focused on explaining how they work interdepartmentally, and the Lithuanians focused on explaining how they work with inspections, including the use of drones and body cameras.

Since the first seminar in 2020, several other seminars were held. In Norway there have been meetings in Stavanger, Oslo, and Bodø. In Lithuania there were meetings in Vilnius and Klaipeda.

In addition to the seminars, some joint inspections were also held for the participants to observe how their counterparts from the other country worked. One of these joint inspections took place in Oslo. The project groups participated in a joint inspection targeted at the construction sector. Here, members of the Norwegian project group performed an inspection, and the Lithuanian participants saw how the Norwegian authorities worked.

During a seminar in Bodø in February 2023, it was decided to start a transport group with representatives from both countries. The transport group has cooperated on knowledge-based analyses of risks and conducted joint inspections. The reasoning be-

hind the transport group and the specific activities will be covered in more detail later in this chapter.

In March 2023 Lithuanian authorities decided to pursue the establishment of a labour crime centre, inspired by their Norwegian counterparts. The pilot for the Lithuanian labour crime centre is due to be operational in early 2024. More details regarding the joint authority centre in Vilnius will be presented later in this chapter.

5.2 Results from the activities

In this subchapter, we describe the results that came from the activities described in chapter 5.1. The meetings and seminars held as part of the joint authority cooperation resulted in two concrete projects, which each have focused on addressing one of the overall objectives of the initiative.

There are several steps related to the intended results of this initiative. Overall, our assessment is that the project has successfully transferred knowledge and experiences of interdepartmental cooperation from Norwegian to Lithuanian authorities through several seminars with the project group.

During the seminar in Bodø in 2023, it was decided to start a transport group, which focused on implementing the learning outcomes from the seminars through practical cases in the transport sector. In addition, a pilot for a new labour crime centre is due to be established in Vilnius in 2024. We discuss aspects related to each of these results below. These are examples of how the strategic and organisational experiences from Norway are being implemented both nationally in Lithuania and within the bilateral cooperation between the countries.

5.2.1 Transfer strategic and organisational experiences from Norway to Lithuania

Some of our interviewees have pointed out that the mandate and purpose for the project group administering the joint authority cooperation was a bit unclear, especially in the beginning. While the labour inspectorates have been the hubs and drivers of the process, some representatives from other departments informed us that it wasn't obvious what the purpose was, why they participated, how they could contribute, and what the benefits were for them.

All our interviewees specify that with so many people involved in the joint authority cooperation it requires resources and competence to lead groups for joint authority cooperation. There is unanimous consensus amongst the interviewees who participated in the joint authority cooperation that the coordinator for the project group ensured activity and progress in good way.

Our impression is that there was a relatively steep learning curve for the Lithuanian participants. Less experience with joint authority activities and some language barriers are factors our interviewees have mentioned that can explain this. Since the participants represent several different authorities, with different areas of responsibility and working methods, it did take time for them to coordinate both internally and when trying to cooperate across departments and borders.

Moreover, it took some time for the Lithuanian authorities to fully understand the advantages and the potential of the Norwegian way of cooperating between different authorities. However, both Norwegian and Lithuanian interviewees describe the seminar in Bodø in February 2023 as a turning point for the transfer of strategic and organisational experiences. Our interviewees indicate that this was when everyone involved understood the essence of what the initiative was trying to accomplish, and the roles

of different participants were clarified. Several interviewees emphasise the importance of regular meetings to facilitate transfer of knowledge and experiences, as well as gaining a better understanding of opportunities and challenges associated with joint authority cooperation.

As a part of the seminars, project group members from Lithuania have observed joint authority inspections in Norway. The Lithuanian interviewees say that these inspections were useful to see how they could benefit from joint authority cooperation in practice.

5.2.2 The transport group

The transport sector is of interest to authorities in both countries. The sector is characterized by many Lithuanian workers working in the Norwegian transport sector, and Norwegian authorities have observed relatively many violations of laws and regulations. Also, some of the companies in the transport sector conduct business both in Lithuania and in Norway.

The transport group consisted of representatives from the authorities participating in the overall joint authority activity in both Norway and Lithuania. The overall objective of this activity was to demonstrate how the Norwegian authorities conduct their knowledge-based work, how they gather intelligence and how they perform analysis. Working knowledge-based is mainly about conducting analyses prior to performing inspections to decide which companies to inspect. This methodology can result in more effective and efficient inspections.

The specific activities of the transport group were to implement the Norwegian authorities' model of knowledge-based cooperation on concrete cases within the transport sector. This involved everything from gathering intelligence and performing analyses to conducting joint inspections. All this was done to

showcase the advantages of knowledge-based work in the analysis leading up to inspections and to make inspections more accurate and efficient.

Our interviews suggest that the knowledge-based approach to inspections was very interesting to the Lithuanian authorities, and that it was an area where they saw big opportunities. The only concerns with this type of work in Lithuania was related to the capacity of the Lithuanian authorities. Due to the smaller size of the organisations, it may be more challenging to allocate enough resources to knowledge-based work.

Overall, our impression is that the transport group's joint inspections successfully attained its objectives. Interviewees from Lithuania report that the inspections were useful and that it was interesting to see how the Norwegian counterparts worked in inspections. The transport group has contributed with concrete examples of methods and results by performing real-life inspections.

While the transport group's activities have shown best practices and transferred knowledge and experiences, there have also been some challenges associated with the group's work.

According to some interviewees, one challenge in both countries was that not all authorities participated equally in the inspections. It seems that the labour inspectorate, the tax administration and the state border guard patrol have been the most active participants and have invested most resources into the group's activities. While there are logical explanations related to the size and resources of different agencies, some of our interviews suggest that it partly reflects how interested and invested other authorities were in both the project and work-related crime in general.

There were also some practical challenges conducting inspections. While there are many methodological similarities, all the participating agencies have different areas of responsibility. While this was expected to be challenging, it was demanding for the leader to coordinate the inspections. However, they were still able to communicate and show the benefits of having multiple authorities' present at the inspection.

Another practical challenge was that one of the agencies, on one instance, sent a participant who did not have experience conducting inspections. The participant had to be replaced by someone with more experience. As a result, that authority was not represented during the first day, which also reduced the efficiency of the inspection. One interviewee pointed out that this shows how important it is that the correct employees are chosen to participate in these joint inspections. Another case was in a recent inspection of the transport sector in Norway. In this case, legal reasons prevented Lithuanian authorities' participation in this joint inspection.

While there have been challenges related to both administration, bureaucracy and practical hassles during the activity, our overall impression is that the transport group significantly contributed to the transfer of the Norwegian model of joint authority cooperation to Lithuania by showing how the learning outcomes from the first stage of the joint authority activities can be implemented in practical cases.

5.2.3 Pilot for a new labour crime centre in Vilnius

The last important result from the joint authority activities is the establishment of a pilot for a new labour crime centre in Vilnius, inspired by its Norwegian counterparts. The centre will initially be funded for one year of operation.

Prior to this project, it is our impression that the Lithuanian authorities have cooperated on a "contact by

need” basis where the different authorities contact each other if they need assistance or information from another authority. The willingness to cooperate seems to vary between authorities. Several visits to Norwegian labour crime centres were important to communicate and show how the centre functions to facilitate cooperation.

The labour inspectorate, the Tax Administration, and Sodra (social services) will have permanent employees working full time in the pilot centre. The other Lithuanian authorities have representatives that are not physically at the centre but can be called upon for assistance when needed. The authorities are the police, the state border guard service and the financial crime investigation survey. This has been deemed the best solution since some authorities, for instance the police, do not have sufficient resources to prioritize including one specialized officer into the centre on a 100 per cent basis. Our impression from the interviews, is that the representation at the centre reflects each agency’s available resources and prioritisation of work-related crime.

Some Lithuanian authorities have reported in interviews that it can be challenging to obtain assistance or information from the other authorities, and that this has limited or slowed down efforts to combat work related crime. To showcase the interdepartmental cooperation in Norway to Lithuanian decisionmakers, the leaders of the Lithuanian authorities have met their Norwegian counterparts in both Norway and Lithuania. The employees of the authorities in both Norway and Lithuania have also visited each other on several occasions.

After these visits and meetings, the advantages of joint authority cooperation became clearer for the Lithuanian representatives. To them, it seemed as if this type of cooperation allowed for more efficient work, as representatives from the different authorities work side-by-side every day. on contrast to hav-

ing to write an e-mail or make a phone call to a person in another authority that they do not really know. This was the beginning of the process of establishing a centre resembling the Norwegian model.

Establishing the centre has taken a lot of work for the various Lithuanian authorities. Our interviews indicate that this has been resource demanding and has been challenging on several accounts. The challenges are mostly related to clarifying which legal grounds this new centre should have, who should participate, where it should be located, and other practical considerations.

Even though not all the agencies participate fully at the centre, there is broad agreement among our interviewees that it is a positive and valuable initiative to combat work-related crime in Lithuania. Our interviewees also emphasised the value of how the joint authority cooperation has improved personal connections between authorities and given the different authorities a better understanding of how other agencies operate within Lithuania. The hope is that this will facilitate improved future cooperation when it is deemed appropriate.

There are some concerns amongst some of our Lithuania interviewees that decision-makers will be too impatient to get results from the centre before it is properly organised and established. Several have pointed out that it is likely going to take some time before the centre can report notable results. KPMG (2022) also pointed out that it is and has been challenging to measure the effects of the Norwegian labour crime centres, because of limited data availability and complex chains of effects.

5.3 Impact

The goal of the joint authority activities was to strengthen the Lithuanian authorities’ fight against undeclared work by transferring the Norwegian

model of joint authority cooperation on a national level and to establish a bilateral joint authority cooperation. In line with the goals, our results suggest that most of the impact from this initiative is found on the Lithuanian side.

Our interviews suggest that knowledge about the Norwegian model for cooperation has been successfully transferred to their Lithuanian counterparts. This knowledge-transfer has been the foundation for establishing both the transport group and the pilot for a new labour crime centre in Vilnius.

Our impression is that the learning outcomes from the transport group and other joint inspections in this activity have already impacted Lithuanian authorities' approach to joint authority cooperation and how they work knowledge based in their analysis work. Interviewees specifically mentioned how knowledge-based inspections make inspections more efficient. However, there is no clear consensus among our interviewees how collaborative activities will progress if and when the funding from Norway Grants expires.

All our interviewees are hopeful and have high expectations for the longer-term impacts of inter-agency cooperation in general, and for the labour crime centre specifically. Although we see this as a promising start, the cooperation between Lithuanian authorities are still in the establishment phase. Hence, it is premature for us to assess what the impact of this initiative has been.

Apart from the concrete impacts discussed above there have been some positive side effects of the joint authority activities that may be unintended. Interviewees have pointed out that the cooperation

has established a better understanding of how other authorities' work. This knowledge will be valuable, even if they revert to the original, and less formal, forms of cooperation.

Both Norwegian and Lithuanian participants point to the fact that the Lithuanian authorities did not know each other that well prior to the project. From the interviews, our impression is that they have gotten to know each other much better through the project. Several of the interviewees point to this as an advantage that has made the work between the Lithuanian authorities more efficient.

Some Lithuanian participants thought the cooperation between authorities worked decently prior to the project. However, this is mostly the case among authorities that are not very dependent on joint authority cooperation to perform their jobs well. The authorities that are dependent on joint authority cooperation generally think the cooperation prior to the project had flaws and that their work has become easier and more efficient from improving the cooperation between authorities.

Overall, it is our impression that participants from all agencies are satisfied with the outcomes and benefits associated with the joint authority activities. However, the perceptions do vary significantly across organisations. Our impression is that those who work primarily with work-related crime are most committed and perceive the largest benefits. Those that work primarily with other matters are less committed to this cooperation, and while they perceive benefits for their organisation, they seem to be smaller. This means that the labour inspectorates seem to perceive larger benefits than other authorities, in both Norway and in Lithuania.

6 Know Your Rights

Know Your Rights is a communication campaign targeted at foreign workers who work in Norway. The campaign's objective was to inform foreign workers about their rights and enable them to fulfil their obligations in the Norwegian labour market. When workers are better informed, they can contribute to Norwegian authorities' effort to prevent and reduce work-related crime.

Note that *Know Your Rights* was a collaboration between the labour inspectorates in Norway, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Romania. Hence, there has been a broader collaborative effort associated with this initiative. The campaign's target group was foreign workers from these four countries, as well as Poland and Latvia.

In this chapter, we primarily summarise the findings from existing evaluations of *Know Your Rights*.⁴

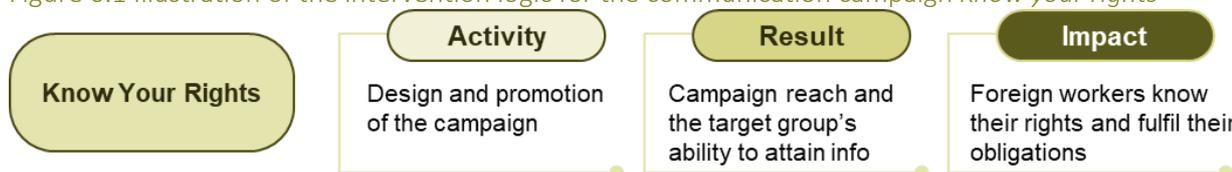
6.1 Activity

The main activity of this initiative was to design and promote the campaign to reach the target group, see figure 6.1.

The final campaign consisted of a webpage which presented information on rights and obligations in the workers' own language. The webpage was promoted with targeted advertisements on Facebook and on other webpages the target group are assumed to frequent.

Representatives from the collaborating countries met regularly to discuss and plan the campaign.

Figure 6.1 Illustration of the intervention logic for the communication campaign *Know your rights*



Source: SØA

6.2 Result

Our assessment was that the promotions in social and traditional media attained a high reach compared to the size of the target group (SØA, 2023). The campaign performed significantly better, in terms of Click-through-rate (CTR), than relevant benchmarks. We surveyed users on the webpage about their experience.

Most of the respondents in the survey answered that the webpage was easy to use, that the content was presented in an understandable way and that the information presented was relevant for their situation. That the information is available in the users'

own languages is an important feature of the campaign. These results indicate that the campaign successfully communicated the information to users.

30 per cent of our survey respondents answered that they discovered violations of some of the rights and obligations they read about on the campaign's webpage in their current employment relationship.

Furthermore, two thirds of those that discovered violations said they had made or were planning to make changes to their working conditions. These results indicate that the campaign successfully informed them about their rights and mobilised them

⁴ For more information, see SØA (2021) *Evaluation of the campaign Know Your Rights* and SØA (2024) *Follow-up of evaluation of the campaign Know Your Rights*.

to try to improve their situation, which support the intended impact of reduced work-related crime.

6.3 Impact

The follow-up analysis of the campaign's impact, two years after the evaluation was published, sought to find information about what happened to the individuals that saw the campaign in 2021, afterwards.⁵ Specifically, whether the campaign affected the target group's will and ability to improve their working conditions. To evaluate the campaign's impact, we used a survey and in-depth interviews with the target group.

The objective of the follow-up evaluation was to find out whether the respondents successfully changed their situation in the labour market. The main results were:

- The campaign seems to successfully mobilise those that discovered violations to act.
- The most common approach to improve working conditions was to talk to the manager. Many also contact a labour union to get help.
- About a third of those that acted successfully improved their conditions.
- Finding a new job provide the highest chance of improving working conditions.
- Our interviews suggest that many employees experience helpful support from labour unions, while they are more frustrated with how the Labour Inspectorate can and will help them.
- The employer's nationality may impact conditions at the workplace.

Our assessment was that the follow-up analysis supported the conclusion from the original evaluation. Overall, *Know Your Rights* has been a successful communication campaign. Information and knowledge regarding rights and obligation seem to

reduce the probability of being employed at a workplace violating workers' rights. This implies that if everyone had information and knowledge, the access to vulnerable employees would be significantly reduced. Still, other factors do affect foreign workers' ability successfully improve their conditions.

The follow-up analysis confirms that *Know Your Rights* contains relevant information for foreign workers in Norway. Several respondents have pointed out that the campaign successfully communicates rights and obligations in the labour market. However, they request more information about how they can and should handle the situation if they discover violations. Several of our informants have requested step-by-step instructions about how they should go about handling their situation.

Information from our interviewees specifically suggests that there is some confusion about what they can and cannot expect from the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority. This is related to the fact that the Inspectorate generally does not enter conflicts under private law. In several of the sender countries, it is common for the labour inspectorates to enter such conflicts.

Our assessment is that a new section about different actions the user can take, would be a valuable addition to the *Know Your Rights* webpage. This section should include information about taking up matters with your employer, how to contact and what to expect from the Labour Inspection Authority and the possibility of contacting a labour union.

While better informed workers can act to improve their working conditions, far from all are able to successfully improve them. Some of our interviewees have also pointed out that some workers voluntarily participate in illegal activities, for example those that

⁵ See SØA (2024) Follow-up of evaluation of the campaign Know Your Rights for more information.

do not permanently reside in Norway. This implies a risk of non-compliance from both employers and workers. Both of these factors imply that we cannot expect communication campaigns like *Know Your Rights* to handle all types of work-related crime.

Logically, communication campaigns like *Know Your Rights* are expected to have the largest impact when both workers and employers are interested in complying with rules and regulations. With relevant information and knowledge, these employees can act to improve their own conditions by informing their managers. Our survey and interviews show that some of those that confronted their managers have successfully improved their conditions, while others were not able to. Note also that more information could enable employees to avoid non-com-

pliant employers in the first place, effectively reducing the employers' income and recruitment.

Cases where the employer does not wish to comply, will require the use of other interventions. Perceived risk of discovery and sanctions seems to be important for how these employers will behave in the labour market.

If they are not able to improve conditions on their own, *Know Your Rights* gives them more information about how to get in touch with the Labour Inspection Authority. However, our interviews suggest that a real and effective response from the contacted authorities, is important to maintain their trust in authorities and conditions in the Norwegian labour market in general.

7 Conclusion

In general, all our informants have been very positive towards the purpose of the project, and many of the results that have been achieved. Most of the interviewees describe their own participation as both interesting and educational at a personal level. Many also describe being inspired for possible improvements in their own organisations.

While there have been challenges and obstacles to overcome along the way, our overall impression is that most of these have been resolved through constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Overall, our informants report personal benefits from participating in this project. At the same time, not all of the ambitions have been met throughout the project period. Our impression is that this is partly because other staff members in the inspectorates may not have sufficient insight into the collaborative project. For future cooperation, it is important that the benefits and opportunities related to cooperation is communicated to all relevant staff members and partnering organisations.

In this chapter we summarise some of our main findings related to each of the initiatives we have evaluated. Furthermore, we give recommendations for future cooperation related to each initiative, based on the implications of our findings.

7.1 Main findings and recommendations for each initiative

7.1.1 Administration of the project

Our interviews indicate that the overall dialogue between project coordinators in both countries, Innovation Norway and those responsible for the progress in each of the initiative been constructive and good. All the participants we have interviewed have been impressed by the overall progress.

The major challenge regarding the administration was to ensure that the expenses incurred by the Norwegian labour inspectorate were reimbursed. While a workaround was made in the later stages of the project, it is still uncertain whether the Norwegian labour inspectorate will receive full reimbursement for earlier expenses.

In addition, our assessment is that it is unfortunate that some of the annual learning seminars were cancelled. Even if there are good reasons for it, these seminars are important to evaluate progress and discuss necessary adaptations.

It should be mentioned that the administrative challenges that arose due to covid-19 and the funds that were not spent, were handled in a good way. It is important to amend the project also during the project period in accordance with any changes in the surrounding environment.

Our recommendations for administration of future cooperation are:

- Ensure that annual learning seminars are conducted, to evaluate progress and discuss necessary adaptations to the project and initiatives.
- Clarifying and resolving how reimbursements are to be handled, early in the project.

7.1.2 Seminars for sharing knowledge and best practices

Based on information from the interviews, our assessment is that the initiatives for sharing of knowledge and best practices (tripartite seminars and annual learning seminars) overall have been viewed as relevant. Sharing of knowledge and best practices have the potential to help combating work-related crime nationally and across borders, by introducing new knowledge and methodologies, which can be adapted and implemented purpose-

fully in the other country. However, there have also been certain issues regarding these activities.

As mentioned, the tripartite seminars were deemed useful and interesting for participants from both countries. However, the Lithuanian participants also pointed out that there was a lack of relevance for their fight against undeclared work. Due to several factors, our informants think that it is difficult to see the relevance of many of the aspects of the Nordic tripartite model in a Lithuanian context. The focus of the tripartite seminars could be shifted more towards the topics where participants perceive more relevance, e.g. discussion among corresponding organisations in the different countries.

Our impression is that the annual learning seminars are necessary to facilitate the planning and the running evaluation of the project. However, we question whether the annual learning seminars is the correct arena to share knowledge and best practices since most of the participants are deep into the project and hence are very well informed. These resources can be more efficiently used elsewhere.

Our recommendations for the seminars for sharing knowledge and best practices for future projects:

- Make the tripartite seminars more relevant to all participants by focusing on topics that are more transferable to the other participating countries, rather than on country specific structures that are less relevant to the other countries.
- Place more emphasis on administration, assessment of progress and planning future activities in the annual seminars. Less emphasis on learning and sharing of best practices. While these seminars are relevant for sharing knowledge, our assessment is that other arenas are probably more relevant to share knowledge with both participants in the project and other stakeholders.

7.1.3 Staff exchange for learning and assistance

According to our interviewees, the concerted inspections that were carried out through the staff exchange for learning and assistance initiatives were overall valuable for the participants.

Our impression from the Norwegian side is that there are examples of results that could not have been achieved without the collaboration with Lithuanian authorities during staff exchanges for assistance. Despite these results, the coordinators ambitions for the total number of concerted inspections were not met throughout the project period.

Based on our interviews, it seems that the coordinators may have under-communicated the wish that inspectors should take more initiative in planning joint inspections. Another factor may be that the use of IMI has increased, but we do not know these effects from our evaluation. The Lithuanian side describes less tangible advantages of the staff exchange for assistance, but are positive nonetheless. We suspect the staff exchange for assistance is more important to the Norwegian side since there are many Lithuanians working in Norway and few Norwegians working in Lithuania.

With regards to the staff exchange for learning, the participating individuals and organisations describe large benefits associated with learning and observing similar work in the other country.

It was a specific goal for this initiative to facilitate future concerted inspections with Norwegian and Lithuanian inspectors. Based on the experiences so far, this goal has not been reached. Our informants described significant benefits from cooperation, and that there is potential for future cooperation. However, our impression is that better communication of opportunities for and processes to initiate concerted inspections the goal can be achieved in the future.

The amount of adaptation and implementation of the other country's best practices varied. The Norwegian side was very fascinated by several Lithuanian approaches but has not chosen or been able to implement them yet. On the other hand, there are examples of implementation of Norwegian practice in Lithuania as a result of the staff exchange for learning, e.g. changes in the questionnaire used during inspections. This either shows that Lithuania has less bureaucracy related to implementing new practices, that the Norwegian ideas were easier to implement or simply that the Lithuanian side is more willing to implement new ideas. We recommend that the participants investigate what the main barriers for implementing best practices from collaborating countries are.

It is problematic if it is the case that the Norwegians are less willing to implement Lithuanian practice than vice versa since this cooperation is about two-way learning. This problem has also been pointed out by some interviewees who thought Norway is too slow and unwilling to implement best practices from, for instance, Lithuania.

Our recommendations for the staff exchanges for learning and assistance for future projects are:

- Conduct additional staff exchanges for learning, specifically observations of inspections, can contribute to increased transfer of knowledge and best practices.
- Placing a clearer emphasis on who joint inspections are expected to be initiated from in both countries to increase the scope of exchanges.
- Evaluate to what degree the use of IMI affects the need for and value from staff exchanges for assistance.
- For Norway: Having a stronger focus on implementing best practices from partnering countries that are relevant also in Norway.

7.1.4 Joint authority cooperation

Establishing the transport group and a pilot for a labour crime centre in Vilnius are examples of concrete operative outcomes of this initiative. The transport group exemplified how joint inspections can make inspections more effective, and participants think the transport group has been very successful both with regard to educating participants but also with regards to concrete inspections. The transport group is a good example of an initiative that was allowed to evolve over time, and hence was rather flexible in nature. It is too early to assess results and impacts of the labour crime centre in Vilnius, but having managed to start a pilot project in a relatively short period of time is a success in itself.

To organise, communicate and coordinate across multiple authorities in two countries is demanding and challenging. Our interviewees are largely positive to how the responsible coordinators have communicated and ensured progress throughout the project. Overall, we believe the project coordinators deserve credit for managing to include many different authorities and for being flexible in the involvement of these relevant partners. However, there have been some communicational and bureaucratic difficulties in coordinating involved parties. Our impression is that these difficulties have diminished over time and have been relatively small considering the size and scope of the project.

The evaluation has highlighted some key learning points which can contribute to strengthen future cooperation:

When it comes to implementing new methods and joint authority collaboration in general, our impression is that the project has contributed to inform and inspire changes, especially in Lithuania. This is in accordance with the overall goal. Several interviewees pointed out that it isn't necessarily possible or appropriate to implement the measures they ob-

served in the other country. Legal constraints, market structure and competence are some of the factors that will affect implementation. Methodological and organisational changes also require enough time to be implemented. Still, others have pointed out that the point was to inspire, while the specific implementation had to be adapted.

Our interviews suggest that, in the beginning, some participants from the partnering authorities did not understand their role in the initiative and were uncertain why they were even there. Better communication towards the other participating authorities and increased involvement from these at the initial stages of the joint authority cooperation may mitigate this. This may mean that the labour inspectorate needs to give away a little bit of power but can contribute to increase ownership of the collaboration amongst the partnering authorities. This is also likely to increase prioritisation of resources from the other authorities and social partners.

Our recommendations for the joint authority cooperation for future projects are:

- This activity is described as the most successful from participants. Now we need more time to observe effects of the pilot for the new labour crime centre in Vilnius.
- Better communication and increased involvement from relevant partners at the initial stages in the joint authority cooperation is necessary to ensure ownership and engagement from the other participating authorities.

7.1.5 The *Know Your Rights* campaign

The *Know Your Rights* campaign has existed a bit on the side during this project. Overall, the information campaign has been successful. 30 per cent of those who responded to the survey answered that they discovered violations in their current job of one or more of the rights and obligations they read about on the campaign's webpage. The survey also performed well in terms of click-through-ratings.

Overall, we deem the *Know Your Rights* campaign as successful. The campaign delivered an important message and was able to communicate this message to a large audience. For minor comments and recommendations regarding possible smaller improvements for future campaigns, see (SØA, Evaluation of the campaign Know your rights, 2021; SØA, Follow-up of evaluation of the campaign Know Your Rights, 2024). Overall, we deem the *Know Your Rights* campaign as successful. The campaign delivered an important message and was able to communicate this message to a large audience.

Our recommendations regarding *Know Your Rights*:

- *Know Your Rights* consists of several elements, e.g. relevant platforms for reach and the use of plain language, which should be an inspiration for future collaboration.
- Provide foreign workers in Norway with more concrete information about how they can act upon the violations they discover at their workplace.

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