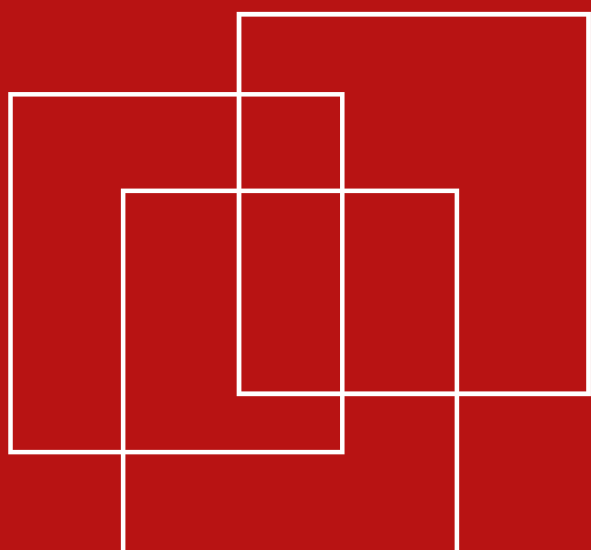




ILO Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards

**Report on the expert advice service and web site
March 2019 (with additional data until June 2019)**



The one-stop shop for managers
and workers:

- ▶ assistance@ilo.org
- ▶ www.ilo.org/business

Operated by the Multinational Enterprises and
Enterprise Engagement Unit, Enterprises Department

**ILO PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE COMPANIES WITH EXPERT
ADVICE ON THE REALIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS AND THE MNE
DECLARATION**

Update report March 2019 (with additional data until June 2019)

The ILO Helpdesk for Business service answers since 2009 individual questions in a free and confidential manner and has since October 2010 a dedicated website where companies, trade unions, governments and others can find information, practical tools and training opportunities and questions and answers to help them put the principles of the MNE Declaration into practice.

Every year, MULTI produces a report for the ILO Helpdesk tripartite Advisory Committee of the ILO's Governing Body. The reporting period covers the period 1 March-28 February, to allow for a comparison over the years as well as to compile cumulative totals. This report covers the period 1 March 2018-28 February 2019 and provides additional information on recent trends based on data collected during the first half of 2019.

The ILO Helpdesk for Business is an ILO service promoted among governments, employers and workers as part of the promotional activities of the MNE Declaration. A promotional leaflet on the services of the ILO Helpdesk exists in English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Myanmar, Thai, and Vietnamese; a Chinese and German version is in preparation. The leaflet is distributed in many global, regional and country-level activities, as well as in the International Training Center of the ILO in Turin. A number of governments (Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland) have included the ILO Helpdesk for Business in their national action plans on business and human rights or related web sites as a supporting service for businesses doing their human rights due diligence. They have requested the Office for copies of the promotional leaflet to hand out during NAP-related activities in their country.

**Box 1: References to the ILO Helpdesk for Business in
National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights (extracts)**

1) Belgium:

« L'OIT a créé un Helpdesk – un service d'assistance gratuit et confidentiel – destiné aux entreprises qui veulent aligner leurs opérations commerciales avec les normes internationales du travail et favoriser le développement des relations industrielles positives au sein de l'entreprise. [...]

Des initiatives telles que les Principes Directeurs des Nations Unies concernant les entreprises et les droits de l'Homme, les Principes Directeurs de l'OCDE pour les entreprises multinationales, les Lignes directrices ISO 26000 relatives à la responsabilité sociétale, la déclaration tripartite de l'Organisation internationale du travail concernant les entreprises multinationales et la politique sociale et le Helpdesk pour les entreprises du Bureau international du Travail seront promus en tant qu'initiatives de référence.»

2) France:

"ILO has created a business helpdesk providing questions and answers, resources and tools on issues connected with workers' rights: discrimination, freedom of association, collective bargaining, wages and benefits, occupational safety and health, forced labour, child labour, etc. It also offers free and confidential assistance for company directors and workers."

3) Germany:

"As the third-largest contributor to the International Labour Organization, the Federal Government is a major sponsor of the support services offered by the ILO. The ILO Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards assists enterprises in applying international labour and social standards correctly. Besides an informative website, the Helpdesk also provides prompt replies to individual queries on a confidential basis as well as training courses."

4) Sweden:

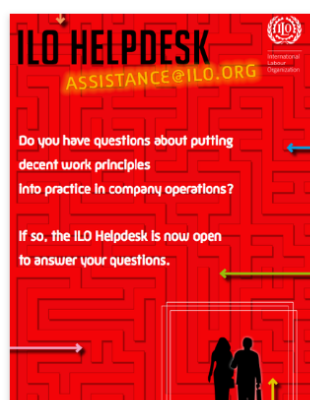
"The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has a helpdesk that provides information and a list of resources and tools for companies that need advice on labour standards. It is also possible to call or email the helpdesk: www.ilo.org"

Box 2: References to the ILO Helpdesk for Business in websites

1) [Switzerland's Federal Council](#)

The screenshot shows the Swiss Federal Council website. At the top, there are navigation links: 'The Federal Council', 'SECO/FDFA', and 'Homepage'. Below this, the Swiss flag and the name of the Swiss Confederation in four languages are displayed. To the right, the section 'Business and Human Rights' is highlighted. A horizontal menu below contains 'The NAP', 'Information for businesses' (which is selected), 'Events and documentation', and 'Further policy areas'. Below this menu, there are four links: 'Homepage', 'Information for businesses', 'Support of the ILO for companies', and 'ILO Helpdesk'. On the left side, under 'Support of the ILO for companies', there is a list with 'ILO Helpdesk' and 'SCORE'. On the right side, the 'ILO Helpdesk' title is followed by a large red graphic with the text 'ILO HELPDESK FOR BUSINESS', the website 'WWW.ILO.ORG/BUSINESS', and the email 'ASSISTANCE@ILO.ORG'.

2) [UN Global Compact](#)



Partner Resource

Resource Author

International Labour
Organization

Website (2009)

ILO Helpdesk

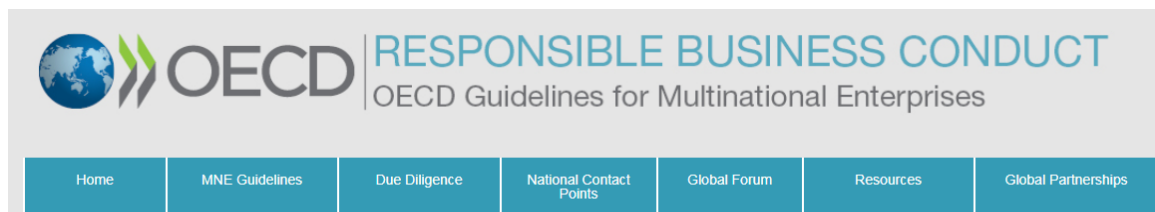
The ILO Helpdesk is a service from the International Labour Organization that provides a one-stop-shop to help company managers and workers understand the application of international labour standards.

Access Resource

 [ILO Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards \(English\)](#)

 [Questions and Answers \(English\)](#)

3) [OECD](#)



Partners and stakeholders

The true intent and purpose of the Guidelines can only be realised through collaborative and multi-stakeholder action. Adhering governments engage with stakeholders in different ways in the implementation of the Guidelines. On a national level, many of these interactions are channeled through NCPs. On an international level, business, trade unions, civil and other partners regularly interact with the OECD.



Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) is an independent international business association devoted to advising government policy makers at the OECD.

Founded in 1962, BIAC promotes the interests of the OECD's business community by engaging, understanding and advising policy makers on a broad range of issues.

Through its 38 policy groups, which cover the major aspects of OECD work most relevant to business, BIAC members participate in meetings, global forums and consultations with OECD leadership, government delegates, committees and working groups. BIAC advocates consensus industry views so to ensure that the resulting policy instruments and guidance assist, not hinder, private sector capacity to generate growth and prosperity. [»www.biac.org](http://www.biac.org)



Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) is an international trade union organisation that represents the views on trade unions at the OECD.

Other important partners



UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
www.business-humanrights.org/UNWorkingGroupPortal



UN Global Compact
www.unglobalcompact.org



International Labour Organisation
www.ilo.org
ILO helpdesk for business:
www.ilo.org/business
ILO MNE learning module:
www.ilo.org/mnelearning

I. Expert Advice Service of the ILO Helpdesk for Business

A. Number of queries and users

Since its establishment in 2009 through February 2019 the Helpdesk has answered 1098 individual queries. A total of 102 receivable requests were answered during the period March 2018 – February 2019, which is a 16% decrease over the previous reporting period, but close to the annual average of 109. However, in the period from March – July 2019 the Helpdesk has received 96 questions, indicating that the next reporting period is likely to significantly exceed the average.

Table 1: Breakdown of Users by Type

	March 2018 – February 2019	Total through February 2019
Workers or Trade Unions	10	106
Employers' organizations	0	2
Governments	4	75
Initiatives	2	18
Inter-governmental	3	10
MNEs	68	694
SMEs	0	21
Suppliers	2	13
Researchers	3	88
NGOs	0	18
Unknown	10	53
TOTAL	102	1098

This overview of users confirms that MNEs continue to be by far the largest group of users of the Helpdesk as it is primarily this group of companies that seek guidance from ILS and the MNE Declaration in their corporate policies and operations than span various legal territories where national legislation may differ. Trade Unions, researchers and Government officials are the second, third and fourth most important group of users.

B. Regional origin of the users and scope of the queries

Table 2 provides a breakdown of users by region where it was possible to identify the region of origin of the user. Western Europe continues to be the most frequent source of requests but the number of users from other regions – especially Latin America and East Asia - is steadily growing. This might be linked to the increased promotion of the Helpdesk service as part of country-level assistance and development cooperation projects in Asia as well as the availability of mirror websites of the Helpdesk in Chinese and Japanese.

Table 2: Users by region

	March 2018 – February 2019	Total through February 2019
Africa	2	66
Pacific	0	16
Caribbean	2	17
Central Asia	6	52
East Asia	12	94
Eastern Europe	1	33
Latin America	9	100
Middle East	3	47
North America	2	52
Western Europe	40	475
International	25	186

Table 3 provides a breakdown of regions identified in the queries, if any. There is a more or less even spread among the regions where a region is indicated in the question formulated by the user. Global/unspecified questions continue to dominate as many questions typically concern the companies' codes of conduct or their general operating policies and how these relate to/are or can be better aligned with international labour standards and the MNE Declaration rather than addressing specific issues in their own operations or their business relationships and supply chains.

Table 3: Regional focus of queries

	March 2018 – February 2019	Total through February 2019
Africa	2	108
Caribbean	0	25
Central Asia	12	114
East Asia	16	141
Eastern Europe	4	53
Latin America	18	107
Middle East	5	95
North America	0	13
Western Europe	2	73
Global/unspecified	34	566

C. Sectors covered in the queries

Table 4 indicates which sectors were specified in queries. No particular sector dominated, although the past year there was a noticeable increase in questions concerning the construction sector. However, a large proportion of the questions are not sector specific.

Table 4: Sectors concerned

	March 2018 – February 2019	Total through February 2019
Agriculture	8	68
Artisanal	0	3
Biofuels	0	9
Chemicals	0	28
Construction	10	50
Electronics	6	45
Extractives	1	47
Finance	0	74
Food	2	38
Forestry	1	4
Garments and textiles	4	16
Health services	0	13
Heavy manufacturing	1	39
ITC	1	23
Light manufacturing	10	63
Pharmaceuticals	0	14
Printing/Publishing	0	4
Public services	3	37
Retail	0	30
Services	2	64
Shipping	2	35
Utilities	1	4
Not specified	50	382

D. Issues raised in the queries

Table 5 provides a breakdown of the issues raised in the queries during this reporting period. The topic for which the highest number of queries has been received during the reporting period is once again **occupational safety and health**, although forced labour, child labour, migrant workers, and hours of work and wages were also common themes. The number of requests for statistical data on labour issues also continued to grow. Two questions were received asking for more information on the company-union dialogue procedure that is promoted through the ILO Helpdesk.

Table 5: Break down of questions by area of MNE Declaration

AREA OF MNE DECLARATION	CATEGORY	MARCH 2018 – FEBRUARY 2019	TOTAL THROUGH FEBRUARY 2019
EMPLOYMENT	Compliance with national law	4	42
	Compliance with principles of ILS	3	67
	Definitions	5	25
	Forced labour	13	81
	FPRW	1	28
	ILO approach to CSR	1	26
	ILO approach to sustainable enterprises	0	5
	ILS and productivity	0	3
	Migrant workers	11	66
	Special categories of workers	5	47
	Child labour	12	88
	Employment promotion	0	11
	Non-discrimination	7	59
	Termination of employment	6	54
	Employment Relationship	0	4
SKILLS AND TRAINING	Other	10	29
	Skills and training	1	12
CONDITIONS OF WORK AND LIFE	General	2	15
	HIV/AIDS	0	2
	Hours of work	15	63
	Housing/Food	2	15
	OSH	17	110
	Paid leave	2	11
	Privacy	0	6
	Social security	3	21
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS	Wages	11	67
	Collective bargaining	3	24
	Freedom of association	4	28
	Social dialogue	0	12
OTHER	Helpdesk operations	1	18
	Interpretation procedure	0	3
	Requests for collaboration	0	15
	Company Union Dialogue	2	2
	Statistical information	11	45
	Miscellaneous	9	49
MNE DECLARATION	MNE Declaration as an instrument	0	20

II. ILO Helpdesk for Business Website

The website in English, French and Spanish has been regularly and consistently updated with new questions and answers, ILO publications, news concerning activities of the existing ILO Business Networks, webinar recordings and information on the ILO training offer relevant to enterprises. An in-depth review of the web pages presenting the “Tools and Resources for Business” has been conducted in collaboration with the technical units. Information on the company-union dialogue also now features more prominently on the Helpdesk home page.

A. General data on website visitors¹

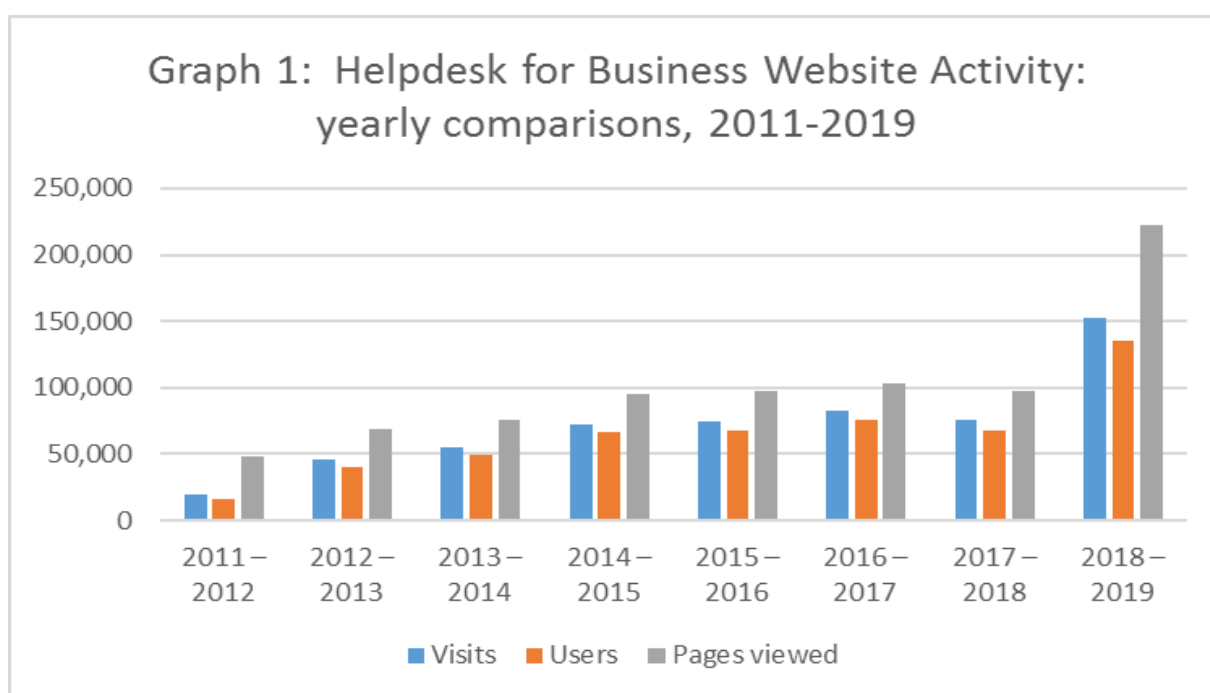
Table 6 provides a summary of activity until the end of February 2019. **The table demonstrates a significant increase in the number of users as the number has doubled between the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 reporting period.** More than half a million users consulted the ILO Helpdesk web site since its creation in 2010. The average number of visits per month is of 12,684 for the reporting period (March 2018 to February 2019) for an average of 6,029 since its creation.

Looking at 2019, the same trend can be observed as the number of visits continues to increase: 89,866 users consulted the ILO Helpdesk web site from 1 January to 30 June 2019 with an average of 17,043 visits/month (the highest average monthly since the creation of the web site).

¹ The data is gathered through Google Analytics.

Table 6: Helpdesk Website Activity: yearly comparisons² and total

	2011 – 2012	2012 – 2013	2013 – 2014	2014 – 2015	2015 – 2016	2016 – 2017	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	Overall Total
Visits (average/month)	19,717 (1,643)	46,144 (3,845)	55,491 (4,624)	72,421 (6,035)	74,705 (6,225)	82,349 (6,862)	75,742 (6,311)	152,218 (12,684)	578,787 (6,029)
Users	16,355	40,656	48,937	66,609	67,954	75,376	67,178	135,706	506,551
% of new users	60%	72.5%	76%	79.65%	78,27%	80,88%	82.5%	82.2%	76,5%
Countries or territories visitors are located in	144	194	205	209	213	210	210	212	-
Pages viewed	48,031	68,364	75,821	94,791	96,984	102,819	97,905	222,013	806,728



² Years are: March 2011 – February 2012, March 2012 – February 2013, March 2013 – February 2014, March 2014 – February 2015, March 2015-February 2016, March 2016- February 2017, March 2017-February 2018 and March 2018-February 2019. The Website was launched in October 2010 so data for 2010 are excluded.

B. Geographical Distribution of visitors

The visitors were located in all five regions. The Americas remains the regions where the majority of web visitors are coming from.

	2011 – 2012	2012 – 2013	2013 – 2014	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017	2017- 2018	2018- 2019	Total
Americas	7,128 (35.93%)	23,962 (51.79%)	33,068 (59.50%)	46,929 (64.80%)	40,748 (68.83%)	44,830 (67.31%)	44,706 (65.83%)	99,240 (73.07%)	251,075 (61.1%)
Europe	7,358 (37.09%)	12,263 (26.50%)	11,851 (21.32%)	14,325 (19.78%)	8,959 (15.13%)	11,576 (17.38%)	11,708 (17.24%)	18,433 (13.57%)	84,765 (20.63%)
Asia	3,088 (15.57%)	5,320 (11.50%)	4,867 (8.76%)	6,284 (8.68%)	5,786 (9.77%)	5,611 (8.42 %)	6,756 (9.95%)	9,923 (7.31%)	40,879 (9.95%)
Africa	1,471 (7.42%)	2,512 (5.43%)	3,259 (5.86%)	3,456 (4.77%)	2,656 (4.49%)	3,416 (5.13%)	3,590 (85.29%)	6,825 (5.03%)	23,595 (5.74%)
Oceania	448 (2.26%)	875 (1.89%)	1,298 (2.34%)	1,123 (1.55%)	800 (1.35%)	710 (1.07%)	921 (1.36%)	1,240 (0.91%)	6,494 (1.58%)
Unknown	344 (1.73%)	1,339 (2.89%)	1,233 (2.22%)	304 (0.42%)	250 (0.42%)	458 (0.69%)	235 (0.35%)	155 (0.11%)	4,083 (1%)

The top 25 countries overall were:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Mexico | 14. Venezuela |
| 2. Colombia | 15. Philippines |
| 3. Peru | 16. Dominican Republic |
| 4. Spain | 17. Honduras |
| 5. Argentina | 18. Canada |
| 6. United States | 19. El Salvador |
| 7. Ecuador | 20. Costa Rica |
| 8. France | 21. South Africa |
| 9. Chile | 22. Australia |
| 10. India | 23. Panama |
| 11. Guatemala | 24. Morocco |
| 12. Bolivia | 25. Malaysia |
| 13. United Kingdom | |

C. Most Visited Webpages

The top 10 consulted Helpdesk Webpages were:

Web page	Page views
1. Q&A on business and freedom of association (in Spanish)	32,637
2. Q&A on business, discrimination and equality (in Spanish)	22,262
3. Q&As on business and occupational safety and health (in Spanish)	19,972
4. Q&As on business and collective bargaining (in Spanish)	8,835
5. Business, discrimination and equality (in Spanish)	7,580
6. Home page in English	6,035
7. Q&As on Business and Occupational Safety and Health (in French)	5,358
8. Business and Freedom of Association (in Spanish)	4,064
9. Business and collective bargaining (in Spanish)	3,884
10. Q&A on business, wages and benefits (in Spanish)	3,593

D. Site Traffic Sources

During the reporting period (March 2018 to February 2019), 89.2% of the users have accessed the Helpdesk web site through search engines, 9.6% accessed it directly (taping the URL directly in their browser or clicking on a link from their bookmarks, emails or PDF documents), which represented a slight increase of 1.5% compares to the previous reporting period.

Only 1% were referred to the ILO Helpdesk website from another web site and the remaining accessed it via social media or a reference in an email.

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