



European Union

Statement

ILO Governing Body, 320th session

(13 – 27 March 2014)

**"Matters arising out of the work of the International Labour Conference
Follow-up to the resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on
fundamental principles and rights at work: Implementation of the plan of
action"**

(GB.320/INS/3.1)

Geneva, 26 March 2014

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EU Statement

Thank you chair,

I speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Turkey*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia†, Montenegro†, Iceland‡, Serbia†, Bosnia and Herzegovina†, Norway§, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

We would like to thank the office for the document. This comes at a timely moment between the adoption of the Plan of Action in 2012 and its in depth and detailed evaluation by the end of 2015. The moment is also timely because some Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work continue to be under threat in many countries around the world.

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work are key to decent work and their promotion must be at the heart of ILO's role. At the same time they are essential to all societies. The respect for these principles and rights underpins sustainable economic and social development. They are enshrined in our laws, in our external relations as well as in our enlargement, trade and development policies. This is why we are highly supportive of the ILO's action to promote Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work worldwide.

* Candidate country

† The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

‡ Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

§ Liechtenstein and Norway are members of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.

We call on all States to ratify and implement the eight core labour standards. We are encouraged by the new ratifications and cases of progress and by the activities of the Office to give effect to Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in non-ratifying states. In this context, we would like to recall that all ILO member States have the obligation to respect, promote and realize the principles of the fundamental conventions arising from the very fact of membership in the organisation.

We are thankful for the information on internal good practices. We encourage the office to step up its efforts to streamline its activities in the framework of the reform and we welcome the increased synergies between the four Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We also encourage the Office to continue engaging member States in good practices and increase the proportion of technical cooperation projects relating to Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work – only 16% in 2013.

We would like to express our concerns on the challenges that are identified in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

On freedom of association and collective bargaining, we note with concern that in some countries this is still not a reality. We believe that freedom of association is key to the realisation of other human rights and a cornerstone of democracy. We will continue to address restrictions to freedom of association and encourage the Office to include freedom of association and anti-discrimination in its awareness raising activities on fundamental principles and rights at work.

On the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, we are concerned about the lack of reliable data on victims of forced labour. We also recognize the involvement of social partners in the coordination, design and implementation of policies to fight against forced labour, where appropriate. We look forward to contribute to the fight against forced labour at the upcoming ILC.

On the effective abolition of child labour, we have launched this year a campaign for the update of the hazardous work list in all European Union's human rights dialogues with its partners. We would encourage ILO members to cooperate in this approach and call on the Office to assist Members in their initiatives towards the effective abolition of child labour.

On discrimination and equal pay for work of equal value, we urge Members of the ILO to fully implement the principles of elimination of discrimination in relation to employment and occupation. The advancement of women's rights and gender equality are of particular importance. There is a close relation between the achievement of pay equality and economic independence and equality in decision-making, and the combating of gender stereotypes.

We urge the Office to remain vigilant to ensure the respect of these rights and principles. The Office should assist Constituents making use of all the instruments at its disposal, including the ILO International Training Centre.

Last but not least, we would like to tackle the challenge of budgetary constraints: we reiterate our request to include budgetary implications and an estimation of the resources needed to implement the plan of action, how they will be allocated and which amount will be devoted to the effective and efficient functioning of the ILO supervisory bodies and the Office as their secretariat.

Thank you chair.