



**European Union
Statement**

**International Labour Conference
104th session
(1st - 13th June 2015)**

Committee for the Application of Standards

Mauritania (Convention N° 29)

Geneva, 9 June 2015

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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European Union Statement

Thank you, chairperson.

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia.

We engage in the promotion of universal ratification and implementation of the eight fundamental ILO Conventions as part of our Strategy on Human Rights. Therefore, we call on all countries to protect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms to which their people are entitled.

We wish to recall the commitment made by Mauritania under the Cotonou Agreement – the framework for cooperation with the European Union – to respect democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles which include the abolition of forced labour. Compliance with ILO Convention 29 is essential in this respect.

We have noted that Act 2007/48 of 9 August 2007 contains detailed provisions criminalizing slavery and punishing slavery-like practices. We further observe that new legislation adopted in 2015 incorporates into national law the penalties provided for in relevant international conventions. We have also noted that the Act has received considerable publicity, but we strongly encourage the Government to continue taking measures to make the population and relevant authorities aware of the problem of forced labour. It seems that victims of forced labour continue to face problems in being heard and asserting their rights. We call on the Government, to take all the appropriate steps to ensure that victims of forced labour are able to assert their rights.

We also encourage the Government to fully implement the 29 recommendations in the roadmap for combating the vestiges of slavery, adopted in March 2014. We concur with the Committee of Experts' observation that for the roadmap to be a driving force, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure specific and rapid results.

Finally, we note that the Committee of Experts regrets that the Government did not provide a report in 2013 and 2014. We call on the Government to cooperate with the ILO and to respond to the requests of the Committee of Experts. We also express our continued readiness to cooperate with the Government of Mauritania to promote development and the full enjoyment of all human rights.

Thank you, chairperson.