



**European Union  
Statement**

**International Labour Conference  
103<sup>rd</sup> session**

**(28 May - 12 June 2014)**

---

**Committee on the Application of Standards  
Belarus (Convention No. 87)**

---

**Geneva, 31 May 2014**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

**International Labour Conference**

**103<sup>rd</sup> session**

**(28 May - 12 June 2014)**

**Committee on the Application of Standards**

**Belarus (Convention No. 87)**

**EU Statement**

Thank you chair.

I speak on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>†</sup>, Montenegro<sup>†</sup>, Iceland<sup>‡</sup>, Serbia<sup>†</sup>, Albania<sup>†</sup>, Norway<sup>§</sup> and Ukraine.

The European Union attaches great importance to its relations with Belarus, a country which neighbours the EU and to the citizens of that country, and remains gravely concerned about the lack of respect for human rights, democracy and rule of law. The EU maintains its policy of critical engagement with Belarus, intended to promote respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles in that country.

The European Union welcomes the fact that a ILO Direct Contacts Mission managed to visit Minsk and could meet with stakeholders from both governmental and non-governmental sides. However, we remain gravely concerned that the recent Direct Contacts Mission has unfortunately shown that there has been no fundamental change or significant progress in implementing the recommendations of the 2004 Commission of Inquiry. In this context, we want to recall that the failure of Belarus to implement these recommendations has led to the suspension of Belarus from the European Union Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) since 2007.

We recall that the development of bilateral relations under the Eastern Partnership is conditional on progress towards respect by Belarus for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human

---

<sup>†</sup> 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.

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

rights. We are willing to assist Belarus to meet its obligations in this regard and will continue to closely monitor the situation in Belarus.

This case has been on the agenda of this committee for eleven times since 1997. The respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles has not improved in Belarus. We believe that freedom of expression, opinion, assembly and association are essential for a democracy.

We call on the Government of Belarus to cooperate fully with the ILO and to provide information on the follow up given to the Commission of Inquiry recommendations. Fulfilling them is essential for freedom of association.

We call on the Belarusian authorities to eliminate the obstacles to trade union registration, in particular the requirements imposed by Decree No. 2 of January 1999 on legal address and 10 per cent minimum membership requirements. These obstacles hinder the establishment and functioning of trade unions in practice.

We also call on the Government to provide the information requested by the Committee of Experts, notably concerning the refusal to authorize the holding of demonstrations and the restrictions on mass activities imposed by the Act on Mass Activities.

We urge the Government, in line with the request of the Committee of experts, to amend Presidential decree No. 24 concerning the use of foreign gratuitous aid. This is essential to ensure that workers' and employers' organisations may benefit from assistance from international organisations of workers and employers. We call on the Government to provide the information requested by the Committee.

We urge the Government to provide all the information requested by the Committee of Experts and to intensify its efforts in cooperation with all the social partners concerned to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. We also encourage the Government to avail itself of the technical assistance provided by the Office.

Thank you chair.

---

<sup>§</sup> Liechtenstein and Norway are members of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.