European Union
Statement

International Labour Conference
103rd session

(28 May - 12 June 2014)

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

Geneva, 6 June 2014

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –
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†, Albania†, Norway§ and the Republic of Moldova.

We attach importance to freedom of expression, opinion, assembly and association. Democracy cannot exist without these rights. We wish to recall the commitment made by Swaziland under the Cotonou Agreement – the framework for Swaziland's cooperation with the European Union – to respect democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles which include freedom of association.

Compliance with ILO Convention 87 is essential in this respect. This case has been discussed several times in this committee in the last decade.

We are very concerned by recent developments in Swaziland that infringe on the rights of freedom of expression, opinion, assembly and association. The arrest and disruption of political activists and trade unionists on 1 May 2014, as well as the arrest and detention of human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko and journalist Bheki Makhubu, demonstrates clear infringements of these rights. We call on the government to respect these rights at all times.

We note that the committee of experts requests the Government to take all necessary steps,

---

* 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.
including legislative measures to proceed to the registration of Trade Union Congress of Swaziland. We ask the Government of Swaziland to urgently amend the industrial relations act to provide for the Union's registration and to urgently take forward this legislation, ensuring that it is in line with Convention 87.

We also note that the Committee of Experts highlighted several legal acts for their non-conformity with Convention No. 87. We urge the Government of Swaziland to make sure that its legislation is fully compliant with the Convention.

We are pleased to learn that a high-level ILO fact-finding mission could visit Swaziland this year. We express the hope that its results will be taken into consideration to produce tangible progress in all the pending issues.

We call on the Government to cooperate with the ILO and to respond to the requests of the Committees of experts. We also urge the Government to avail itself of the assistance of the ILO.

We also express our continued readiness to cooperate with the Government of Swaziland to promote the development and implementation of fundamental rights.

Thank you chair.

---

\(^6\) Liechtenstein and Norway are members of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.