



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Forced labour: Commission urges EU countries to implement new ILO Protocol**

The European Commission proposed to the EU's Council of Ministers EU Member States should be authorised to ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO) new Protocol to the [Forced Labour Convention](#). The Protocol, together with a complementary Recommendation, was adopted by the 103<sup>rd</sup> session of the International Labour Conference in June ([IP/14/669](#)). Countries ratifying the ILO Protocol agree to prevent the use of forced labour, in particular in the context of trafficking in human beings, to improve the protection of victims, and to provide access to compensation. It also enhances international cooperation in the fight against forced or compulsory labour.

László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, said: *"The new Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention aims to step up the fight against this terrible human rights violation and adapt it to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I urge Member States to ratify this Protocol as soon as possible, so as to help to put an end to this inhuman exploitation of workers"*.

States ratifying the ILO Convention are required to develop a national policy and plan of action for the suppression of forced labour, in consultation with workers and employers' organisations. They must take measures to prevent forced labour, including by informing vulnerable people and protecting them from possible fraudulent recruitment practices.

As regards the victims of forced labour, the Convention introduces an obligation to ensure their identification, release, protection, recovery and rehabilitation. Further clauses require ratifying States to provide access to remedies, including compensation, to all victims and to ensure that competent authorities are entitled not to prosecute them for unlawful activities which they have been compelled to commit.

### **Background**

The ILO estimates that over 21 million people worldwide are today victims of forced or compulsory labour, which generates US\$ 150 billion in illegal profits per year.

The EU is committed to promoting human rights and decent work and to eradicating human trafficking, both internally and in its external relations. All EU Member States have ratified the core labour standards, including the ILO Forced Labour Convention. The provisions of the new Protocol to this Convention echo the principles provided in EU legislation and policies.

An authorisation by the Council is necessary for Member States to ratify the Protocol because parts of it fall under EU competence. On the other hand, the EU itself cannot ratify any ILO instrument, because only States can be parties to it.

## **For more information**

[News item on DG Employment website](#)

[ILO's website on forced labour](#)

[László Andor's website](#)

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