

**20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Adoption of the United Nations Migrant Workers Convention:**

**Call for Ratification by the Member States of the European Union**

**Open Letter to  
Mr Yves Leterme, Prime Minister of Belgium  
for the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

Brussels, 15 December 2010

Dear Mr Leterme,

On the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2010, we call upon the current Trio of Presidencies of the Council of the European Union to urge the Governments of EU Member States to seize this occasion to take steps towards the ratification of this crucial text, which provides a legal framework for international labour migration. Ratification by Member States would show their commitment to the core values of the European Union and help to overcome the widespread abuse of migrant workers in Europe by effectively protecting their human rights.

The UN Migrant Workers Convention is one of the nine core United Nations human rights instruments. It recognises the specific vulnerabilities of migrant workers and promotes humane and lawful working and living conditions. Furthermore, it provides guidance on the elaboration of national migration policies, which can only be effective if they are based on the respect for human rights and the rule of law, and sets out provisions to combat exploitation of migrant workers and members of their families in countries of origin, transit and destination. Since its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1990, the Convention has been ratified by 44 States and signed by a further 15 States. Regrettably, no Member State of the European Union has signed nor ratified it yet.

Our call is the last stage of the six-month petition campaign ‘Europe, it’s time to ratify the UN Migrant Workers Convention’, launched by December 18 at the European Parliament on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention in 2003. A total over 6000 signatures have been collected from all 27 EU Member States and beyond. The list of signatures includes 66 MEPs from 23 Member States and 5 different political groups, as well as around 1000 civil society organisations, faith-based groups and trade unions at the national, European and international level.

This initiative is part of a global campaign initiated by the International Steering Committee of the Campaign for Ratification of the Migrants Workers Convention, a unique network of UN agencies and international civil society organisations, calling on all governments to take immediate action to end widespread human rights violations, suffered daily by migrant workers around the world, by ratifying this Convention. As a member of the mentioned Steering Committee and convenor of the European Platform for Migrant Workers' Rights (EPMWR), December 18 is responsible for the European part of this global campaign.

We would be extremely interested in listening to your views on the matters raised in this letter and look forward to your reply.

René Plaetevoet  
Director

December 18  
On behalf of the European Platform for Migrant Workers Rights

**Co-signed by the following civil society representatives**

Joël Decaillon  
Deputy General Secretary  
European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

Doris Peschke  
General Secretary  
Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)

Frédéric Mawet  
Director  
Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et Etrangers (CIRE)

Conny Reuter  
Secretary General, SOLIDAR

Dan Van Raemdonck  
Vice-President  
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Bogdan Vanden Berghe  
General Secretary 11.11.11