



## **BWI and EFBWW call on European authorities to take action against Myanmar's military**

BWI and EFBWW, representing more than 12 million workers, including 2 million workers in the construction, woodworking and forestry across the world and in Europe, are calling on the European authorities and institutions to take immediate and urgent action to put pressure on Myanmar's military junta and its commercial interests.

The global clamour to defend the country's democracy has urged trade unions and workers around the world to organise, unite and stand with the people of Myanmar and isolate the Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and other military leaders responsible for the coup.

BWI and EFBWW said that EU authorities should use the new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, suspend the EBA scheme and reinstate the 2008 European Union (EU) action titled, "Council regulation renewing and strengthening the restrictive measures in respect of Burma/Myanmar." The unions explained that this is the latest revision since the first restrictions were put in place in 1996 because of the concern about the absence of progress towards democratization and the continuing human rights violations in Burma/Myanmar. The legislative act was previously revised in 2000, 2003, 2005 and 2006.

The latest regulations, spelled out over 278 pages, prohibit the importation of sound logs, timber and timber products that originate in Myanmar. This includes the transport of goods that originate in Myanmar or are being exported from Myanmar to a third country and have a final destination within the European Union Community. It is also illegal to participate, knowingly and intentionally, in activities whose object or effect is, directly or indirectly, to circumvent the prohibitions in the revised restrictions.

BWI and EFBWW urged the EU institutions and authorities to put in place the said measures until the Myanmar military has rescinded its declaration of a state of emergency, immediately released all political figures and activists, recognised the Myanmar people's right to choose their leaders and remove limits on freedom of expression, assembly and association.

Tom Deleu Secretary-General of the EFBWW stated, "the situation in Myanmar is very serious. The EU should react appropriately and reactivate its human rights sanctions regime against this military junta with the aim to support democratic forces in the country. We cannot condone how the military regime finances itself through the trade of valuable teak to the EU."

Ambet Yuson, Secretary- General of BWI said, “all of the country’s forests are managed by the state, with the Myanmar Timber Enterprise (MTE), a state-run company, holding a monopoly over the trade. The trade is bringing hundreds of millions of dollars directly in the hands of the regime. We want that to be stopped, and if the EU acts quickly, we will urge other authorities to follow.”