Resolution on reinstatement of Myanmar /Burma's access to generalised tariff preferences

2012/2929(RSP) - 23/05/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on International Trade on reinstatement of Burma/Myanmar's access to generalised tariff preferences. It recognises the significant steps taken by President Thein Sein and other reformers in Burma/Myanmar in introducing democratic reforms over the past year which have led the Commission to propose the reinstatement of Burma /Myanmar's access to the Generalised Scheme of Tariff Preferences (GSP).

However, Parliament notes that there is a **need for caution**, given that, according to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur, **serious human rights concerns remain**, including arbitrary detention, forced displacement, land confiscations, the use of child soldiers (5000 according to ILO estimates), aggressive acts against ethnic minorities and a weak judiciary. It calls for continuing peace talks with ethnic groups, in particular the **Kachin,** and urges the authorities to set out an action plan to end the **repression against the Rohingyas** and other repressed minorities, including

- **granting citizenship rights**;
- addressing deep-rooted prejudices based on ethnicity and religion; and
- developing a policy of integration and long-term reconciliation for displaced communities.

Members call for an **increase in the level of EU bilateral development aid** to Burma/Myanmar under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework and for the Government of Burma/Myanmar to **promote action in the main areas covered by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).** Parliament expects the Government of Myanmar/Burma to facilitate the opening of a **UN regional Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** with a full mandate, noting that despite several promises by President Thein Sein, this UN Office has not yet been able to establish a permanent presence in the country.

Parliament urges the Government of Myanmar/Burma to accelerate efforts to reform legislation that contravenes international human rights standards, with clear target dates for the conclusion of each review.

The Commission is asked to monitor developments in Burma/Myanmar with respect to serious and systematic violations of human rights, and to respond if necessary, through **renewed proposals for the withdrawal of trade preferences**.

Parliament urges the implementation of the **highest standards of corporate social responsibility,** as laid out in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the EU's 'Strategy 201114 for Corporate Social Responsibility'. It calls on large European companies doing business with Burma/Myanmar to report on the **application of their due diligence policies** relating to human rights, workers' rights and the environment.

Members call on the Government of Burma/Myanmar to:

- strengthen its trade institutions, underlining the importance of the Commission's short-term trade-related assistance programme to start in 2013;

- fully implement its Joint Action Plan with the ILO on the eradication of forced labour by 31 December 2015;

- implement all aspects of the **action plan on child soldiers**, which it signed with the UN, noting that reports that the forced recruitment of children into the ranks of the Tatmadaw Kyi (Myanmar army) and the Border Guard Forces has not ceased ;

- ensure that farmers and communities are **protected from land confiscation and forced evictions,** noting concerns about the Constitution, the Farmland Law and the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law ;

- move quickly towards full **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative** (EITI) compliance, which will require it to disclose the revenues it receives from extractive industries and economic activities.