Resolution on labour conditions and health and safety standards following the recent factory fires and building collapse in Bangladesh

2013/2638(RSP) - 23/05/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 459 to 1 with 13 abstentions a resolution on labour conditions and health and safety standards following the recent factory fires and building collapse in Bangladesh.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, ECR, GUE/NGL and Greens/EFA groups.

It recalls that on 24 April 2013, more than 1 100 people died and some 2 500 were injured in the garment factory collapse at the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh, making it the worst tragedy in the history of the global garment industry. It expresses sorrow about the tragic and **preventable loss of life** and condemns those responsible. Members expect **those responsible for criminal negligence to be brought to justice** and expect **full access to the justice system for all victims**, so as to enable them to claim compensation. Multinational textile retailers that were producing at these factories must be involved in the establishment of a **financial compensation plan**.

Welcoming the Accord on Fire and Building Safety finalised on 15 May 2013, which aims to improve safety standards at production sites (and which covers the arrangements for paying for such measures), Members call on all other relevant textile brands to support this effort, **including textile retailers Walmart, Gap, Metro, NKD and Ernstings, which continue to reject any binding agreement**. They also welcome the Action Plan adopted on 4 May 2013, which will allow workers to form trade unions without prior permission from factory owners and engage in collective bargaining.

Recalling that Bangladesh benefits from duty- and quota-free access to the EU market under the ‘Everything But Arms’ (EBA) scheme of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), and that **these preferences can be withdrawn** in the event of serious and systematic violations of principles laid down in conventions listed in the GSP Regulation, Parliament calls on the Commission to **investigate Bangladesh's compliance** with these conventions and expects an investigation to be considered should Bangladesh be found to be in serious and systematic violation of the principles laid down in them.

The Commission is asked **actively to promote responsible business conduct** among EU companies operating abroad, with a special focus on ensuring strict compliance with rules in the areas of human rights, labour and the environment. Parliament also wants all businesses that contract or subcontract to factories to adhere fully to internationally recognised CSR practices, and to **critically investigate their supply chains** in order to ensure that their goods are produced exclusively in factories that fully respect safety standards and labour rights. It suggests the **development of a voluntary social labelling standard** certifying that a product has been manufactured in accordance with ILO core labour standards throughout the entire supply chain.

Lastly, Parliament considers deeply regrettable the failure of the Bangladeshi Government to **enforce national building regulations**, and calls on the Government to investigate allegations that the failure to implement those regulations was due to **collusion** between corrupt officials and landlords seeking to reduce their costs.