

Scheme of generalised tariff preferences: amending Annex III

2017/2511(DEA) - 27/04/2017

The European Parliament **rejected** by 119 votes to 436, with 22 abstentions, a motion for a resolution tabled by the GUE/NGL group, **which sought to object to the Commission delegated regulation** of 11 January 2017 amending Annex III to Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences.

Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 empowers the Commission to adopt delegated acts in order to establish or amend Annex III in order to grant a requesting country the special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance by adding that country to the list of GSP+ beneficiary countries.

On 11 January 2017 the Commission adopted a delegated act to add Sri Lanka to Annex III of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012.

Members at the origin of the motion for a resolution considered that the Sri Lankan government's reform efforts, including those that directly relate to the GSP+ criteria, have not yet delivered on their aim of complying with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The motion for a resolution also focused on:

- the conclusions of the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on Sri Lanka of 10 February 2017 according to which the measures taken by Sri Lanka since October 2015 have been 'inadequate to ensure real progress';
- the identification by the Committee of Experts of the International Labour Organization (ILO) of shortcomings in relation to ILO Conventions 87 and 98, the insufficiencies of the Industrial Disputes Amendment Act 56 of 1999;
- the failure to complete the process of repealing and replacing the Prevention of Terrorism Act;
- the suspicions that the Sri Lankan government is not adequately tackling the culture of impunity.

In conclusion, Members stated that the **existing human rights violations in Sri Lanka raise concerns** about the appropriateness of granting GSP+ status while not enough real progress is being made according to international bodies.