Resolution on the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

2021/2885(RSP) - 16/12/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 668 votes to 3, with 14 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS).

As a reminder, the KPCS was established as a UN-mandated certification scheme in 2003 to stop the trade in conflict diamonds, which was fuelling civil wars. The KPCS has a tripartite structure involving governments as decision-makers and international diamond industry and civil society representatives as observers. The EU and its 27 Member States count as a single participant. The KPCS claims to have been effective in almost completely stopping the trade in conflict diamonds as originally defined, with it now representing less than 1 % of the trade in rough diamonds, compared to 15 % in 2003.

Revised definition

The KPCS defines conflict diamonds as ‘rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments’. Human rights abuses continue to occur in relation to diamond mining across diamond-rich conflict-affected and high-risk areas and may include child and forced labour, beatings, torture, sexual violence, the forced disappearance of people, forced evictions and resettlement, illegal land grabs and the destruction of ritually or culturally significant sites. The desire of consumers to have certainty about the origin and ethical nature of diamonds cannot currently be met. This has resulted in a decline for demand for natural diamonds. Mechanisms such as the KPCS need to be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they are able to meet consumer expectations and international obligations relating to corporate social responsibility and sustainable development.

Against this background, Parliament stressed the urgent need to **revise the definition** of conflict diamonds to include human rights and the social and environmental conflict-related dimensions of diamond production to ensure that diamonds coming into the EU market are not linked to any human rights abuses or environmental crimes, whether committed by rebel groups, governments or private companies. It stressed that the KPCS should apply, in addition to rough diamonds, to cut and polished stones.

Effective implementation

Parliament called for the KPCS to be more effectively implemented to ensure that no conflict diamonds enter legitimate supply chains and for the strengthening and improved monitoring and enforcement of the internal controls of participating states. Parliament also urged the parties to the KPCS to create an **independent monitoring mechanism**, as the recommendations issued by peer review visits are of a non-binding nature and often fail to address weaknesses in the implementation of internal controls or bring meaningful change in cases of non-compliance with KPCS minimum requirements.

Improved traceability

The resolution pointed out that it is essential to be able to track diamonds from mine to market through more than just the paper trail accompanying diamond shipments. Therefore, it is fully receptive to the idea of using new technologies such as blockchain to improve traceability and welcomed the work towards the digitalisation of Kimberley Process certificates.

Adequate funding

The Commission and the European External Action Service are called on to ensure that sufficient funds are allocated for capacity-building under the Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention thematic programme to support the sustainable and conflict-sensitive management of natural resources and compliance with the Kimberley Process and other similar initiatives applicable to conflict minerals, in order to improve the livelihoods of mining communities and enhance artisanal mining. Parliament called for those who allocate geographic funds to also take capacity-building and conflict prevention activities into account.

In addition, Parliament called on the EU to consider additional autonomous measures to ensure that rough, cut and polished diamonds linked to human rights abuses are not placed on the EU market, in order to overcome the shortcomings of the KPCS.