The impact of international developments on the Community's textile and clothing sector

1995/2262(COS) - 14/11/1996 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Fernando MONIZ (PSE, P), Parliament considered that, in spite of the difficult situation of the EU textile and clothing industry, the sector still has a future as long as it becomes more competitive and as long as the WTO system creates conditions on an international scale for fair and genuine competition. Such modernization should promote diversification, conversion of production capacities, training for employees and greater ecological acceptability of products and production methods. Parliament took the view that modernization of the textile and clothing industry must not only involve classic rationalization, but must also aim to achieve regional diversification, the conversion of production capacity and workers' skills, and more environmentally friendly products and production processes. It considered that the Commission shows an excessive lack of objectivity in its Communication since it proposes no plan of action that genuinely helps to prevent the decline of a major industrial sector in the Community, which still accounts for more than two million jobs. In the event that the timetable for integration into the WTO system were not to be met, the Community's textiles sector must not be 'sacrificed' to other sectors. Parliament called for greater coordination of national research to limit massive relocation and improve the sector's competitiveness. It also called for a more effective campaign to be conducted against fraud and trade irregularities. It recognized that non-compliance with environmental and social requirements and the failure to conform to Community standards on intellectual property and the fundamental requirements of the ILO, as well as minimum standards of working conditions, are important factors in distorting competition in the sector. Consequently, it called on the Singapore Ministerial Conference (December 1996) to initiate a dialogue on the connection between respect for minimum social standards and international trade.