Perspectives of women in international trade

2006/2009(INI) - 28/09/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Hiltrud **BREYER** (Greens/EFA, DE) on perspectives of women in international trade. Pointing out that 70% of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty in the world are women, Parliament stressed the need for coherence between the objectives of European policy for gender equality and the objectives of trade, development and aid policy. Whilst many women had also benefited from trade liberalisation and foreign direct investment, liberalisation had contributed to the informalisation of labour relations, the decline in working conditions and the feminisation of employment in several sectors of the economy.

Parliament called for the following:

- prioritising the lifting of all reservations to the CEDAW and ratification of its Optional Protocol by all partner states;

- studies on the way in which women could benefit from trade liberalisation and for systematic collection of gender disaggregated data in order to remedy the gender blindness of current trade policies and policies of global economic institutions;

- gender impact assessments before the conclusion of trade agreements with third countries and effective conditionality clauses with those countries in which violation of human rights, particularly women's rights, are wide-spread;

- the formal establishment of a trade and gender desk within its DG Trade;

- ensuring that companies profiting from EU market access programmes in the framework of EU cooperation policy do not contribute to the spread of practices such as the inhuman exploitation of employees, in particular women;

- the submission to Parliament of a report co-signed by the donors and beneficiaries of aid, in order to prove that specific funding has not been used for purposes other than those initially intended;

- special attention to the legal restrictions on women's access to means of production such as credit, land rights and capital, in the Commission’s discussions with third countries;

- the "aid-for-trade" programmes should be designed to promote gender equality and sustainable development, and be financed through additional funds;

- Member States must do their utmost to ensure that a gender perspective is taken into account in world trade negotiations.