



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

27.4.2015

B8-0372/2015

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the anniversary of the Bangladesh factory fires and progress of the
Bangladesh Sustainability Compact
(2015/2589(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

European Parliament resolution on the anniversary of the Bangladesh factory fires and progress of the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact (2015/2589(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the EC-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement of 2001,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular that of 23 May 2013¹,
 - having regard to the updated OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises of 2011,
 - having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,
 - having regard to the ILO declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,
 - having regard to the UN Global Compact on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption,
 - having regard to the Compact for continuous improvements in labour rights and factory safety in the ready-made garment and knitwear industry in Bangladesh,
 - having regard to the UN Johannesburg Declaration on sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development,
 - having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which set a framework for both governments and companies to protect and respect human rights and which were endorsed by the Human Rights Council in June 2011,
 - having regard to the Sustainability Compact for continuous improvements in labour rights and factory safety in the ready-made garment and knitwear industry in Bangladesh,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 24 April 2013, 1 134 people died and hundreds were injured when the Rana Plaza building in Savar, Bangladesh, collapsed;
- B. whereas at least 112 people died in the Tazreen factory fire, in the Ashulia district of Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 24 November 2012;
- C. whereas at least six people died and more than 60 were injured after the roof of a partially built cement factory recently collapsed in Bangladesh and whereas numerous people died in other factory fires occurring between 2006 and 2013;

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0230.

- D. whereas the EU is Bangladesh's leading trading partner, with exports which represent 10 % of the country's GDP and whereas 90 % of these exports are ready-made garments corresponding to 60 % of Bangladesh's total ready-made garments (RMG) exports and some 2.5 million jobs in the country;
- E. whereas as a Least-Developed Country (LDC), Bangladesh benefits from duty-free quota-free access to the EU market for all its products under the Everything but Arms (EBA) initiative, which covers 55 % of Bangladesh's exports, much of it clothing and textiles;
- F. whereas, the RMG industry is a driver of sustained economic growth in Bangladesh, which over the past two decades has helped cut core poverty from 60 % to 30 % of the population and whereas it employs 4 million people, about 80 % of whom are women;
- G. whereas over 5 000 dependants of the deceased and survivors of the Rana Plaza disaster have still received only 40 % of the compensation they are owed and whereas while arrangements are in place to pay a further 30 % of their total claim, the final payment is prevented as a result of a USD 9 million shortfall in funding needed;
- H. whereas in its resolution of 18 September 2014¹ the European Parliament regretted that the voluntary compensation arrangement through the Donor Trust Fund had not reached its target and noted that a mandatory mechanism would be more beneficial for the survivors and the families of the victims;
- I. whereas the ILO is supporting the national initiative of the Government of Bangladesh in carrying out structural, fire and electrical safety inspections of some 1 800 RMG factories, many of which are converted commercial or residential buildings;
- J. whereas the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety have carried out inspections of the 1 687 factories from which their member companies source;
- K. whereas there are severe shortcomings in transparency and traceability in the global supply chain, and decent work in global supply chains will be a key point on the agenda of the 2016 ILO Conference;
- L. whereas the Commission initiative to launch a Global Sustainability Compact has been a key element in improving conditions for garment workers in Bangladesh but needs further progress in its implementation;
1. Remembers the victims of the Rana Plaza and Tazreen fire, and deeply regrets the loss of human lives; underlines that these losses could have been avoided with different and better safety at work systems;
 2. Calls on the international brands responsible, the Government of Bangladesh and representatives of the Bangladesh industry to complete, in a timely manner, the agreed and owed compensation for the survivors and the families of the victims who died in the

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2014)0024.

disasters referred to;

3. Calls on the Commission to encourage international textile companies based in the EU to contribute to the Donors Trust Fund;
4. Welcomes the EU initiative which brought together the Government of Bangladesh, the EU, the US and the ILO – the so-called ‘Compact Partners’ – in ensuring a new start in occupational health and safety, working conditions and respect for labour rights and promoting responsible business conduct in the RMG industry in Bangladesh;
5. Stresses that the Compact Partners have acknowledged the improvements since the launch of the Compact on respect for labour rights, health and safety at work and responsible business conduct, as indicated in the report of the implementation review and progress stocktaking of 20 October 2014;
6. Recognises that these improvements have to be further developed since there are a number of areas in which further measures need to be taken for full implementation of the actions outlined in the Compact, in particular on respect for labour rights, labour inspections, decent wages, structural integrity of buildings and occupational safety and health and responsible business conduct;
7. Calls on the Compact Partners to address these specific issues and follow the implementation of the Compact commitments and the achievement of the actions which have been outlined in coordination with other donors and stakeholders;
8. Strongly believes that all companies involved in the garment sector in Bangladesh should respect labour standards throughout their supply chain in line with internationally recognised corporate social responsibility principles and in dialogue with workers’ representatives;
9. Welcomes the major commitments, followed by concrete actions, taken by the Bangladesh Government as a reaction to these tragedies, in particular the recruitment of 153 labour inspectors, the upgrade of the Directorate of Inspection for Factories, the increase in the minimum wage for RMG workers, the adoption of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2013 for improving workers’ rights and the measures for a permanent employment injury insurance scheme;
10. Welcomes the Commission’s intention to launch an initiative on responsible supply chains in the garment sector in the framework of the European Year for Development in 2015, involving all relevant stakeholders;
11. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to fully apply these reforms and implement them properly and to continue to work for further reforms of the labour system in order to address the remaining areas in which further progress is expected; insists that ILO Conventions 87 and 98 must be fully complied with and its coverage be extended to all workers, including those working in export processing zones (EPZs), in which trade unions continue to be banned and working conditions and health and safety standards are known to be extremely poor;

12. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to combat corruption, which may undermine the effectiveness of many legislative initiatives on safety at work in that country;
13. Hopes that this important initiative of July 2013 can be adopted and extended to other countries in the world and to other business areas in order to prevent further tragedies and reinforce safety at work; in this context, calls on the Commission to explore the possibility of similar initiatives with our major trade partners, where the ILO, business sectors and governments can work together to improve safety at work and general labour conditions;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the European Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Human Rights Council and the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh.