



Committee on Development

2015/2038(INI)

11.11.2015

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on International Trade

on the implementation of the 2010 recommendations of Parliament on social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility
(2015/2038(INI))

Rapporteur: Lola Sánchez Caldentey

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on International Trade, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that EU trade and investment policies are interlinked with social protection, development, human rights and environment policies; calls on the Commission to respect the principle of Policy Coherence for Development in all external policies and, specifically, to include it in all treaties in ways consistent with agreed international commitments to human rights, decent work, gender equality and environmental sustainability;
2. Recalls the 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development, which confirms the right to development as an inalienable human right; calls on the EU to respect, within the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, other internationally agreed treaties and the Sustainable Development Goals, the sovereignty of developing countries in line with the development principle of democratic ownership, as embedded in the development effectiveness agenda; stresses the importance of ensuring people's dignity and the obligations and duties of all investors, in order to guarantee internationally agreed social, environmental and human rights standards, while promoting effective cooperation with all development actors;
3. Calls on the EU to recognise the common, but differentiated, responsibility of developing countries, while ensuring equity when addressing the post-2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; recalls the EU's responsibility in guaranteeing partner countries' ownership and contribution to their own development, particularly as regards tax, trade and investment policies; in particular, stresses the need to rebalance global rules governing trade and investment with human rights obligations, so as to find the right balance between the rights and responsibilities of firms and governments;
4. Recalls that the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda (based on ILO Conventions and recommendations) constitutes an essential part of the sustainable development strategies that can be applied by business enterprises; stresses in this context that social dialogue is a key criterion for business accountability;
5. Notes that the CSR agenda must be adapted to the specific needs of regions and countries in order to contribute to improving sustainable economic and social development;
6. At a time of increasing interest in the private sector as a development actor, views as regrettable the significant lack of adequate information and transparency as regards the actions of corporations and their impact on social and environmental standards and human rights; underlines the importance of an effective increase in the transparency and accountability of corporations and an independent ex-ante impact analysis prior to the signing of any international agreement, including trade agreements; calls, in the remit of EU trade agreements, for a strong monitoring and enforcement mechanism to effectively ensure corporations comply with social, environmental and human rights standards; calls on the European Union and its Member States to promote binding measures to ensure that

multinational corporations pay taxes in the countries in which their profits are generated and to promote compulsory country-by-country reporting by the private sector, thus enhancing the domestic resource mobilisation capacities of countries;

7. Recalls that the incorporation of a human-rights-based approach should be at the heart of EU development policy; reiterates that, at a time when the use of blending as an EU development tool is growing, adherence to, and implementation of, internationally recognised guidelines and principles concerning business behaviour and their accountability instruments (namely the ILO Conventions and standards, including the ILO Declaration on Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN Global Compact and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights) should become key conditions for the granting of private-sector support in development cooperation;
8. Deplores the fact that despite the unanimous endorsement of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the Human Right Council in 2011, the number of human rights abuses linked to business activity continues to grow; calls on the Commission to conduct a report on the state of implementation on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
9. Considers it regrettable that a regulatory framework for the way corporations comply with human rights standards and obligations with respect to social and environmental standards is still lacking, which allows certain states and companies to circumvent them with impunity; calls for the setting-up of a mandatory and enforceable regulatory framework to govern the way corporations comply with human rights and obligations with respect to social and environmental standards; regrets that current human rights clauses in free trade agreements and other economic partnership agreements are usually not respected; reiterates its call for the European Commission to be more committed to promoting binding and non-negotiable human rights and social and environmental clauses in the negotiation of international agreements;
10. Urges the Commission to further promote mandatory and enforceable initiatives for responsible mining, logging and sourcing of commodities, which may include private sustainability-bound schemes throughout the supply chain, and to step up environmental and social product and process life cycle analysis, in order to improve consumer information and effectively ensure the accountability of companies;
11. Calls for the EU to follow UNCTAD's Comprehensive Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development recommendations in order to ensure responsible, transparent and accountable investments, so as not to undermine social and environmental standards, human rights, development and people's dignity, while guaranteeing respect for human rights, gender equality, decent work, union rights, environmental protection, social protection, universal access to quality goods and public services (paying particular attention to public and universal health coverage), social protection, universal access to medicines, and food and product safety;
12. In a context where existing standards, principles, and mechanisms for redress on business and human rights are fragmented in international law, welcomes the recent incorporation of human rights clauses into bilateral free trade agreements and other economic partnership agreements, as well as a chapter dealing with sustainable development;

considers that these clauses pave the way for better cooperation between the EU and its partner countries; recalls the responsibility of the states to guarantee respect for and promotion of human rights; considering that there has been little progress in the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles, calls for the EU and its Member States to engage actively in the work of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Environment Programme on an international treaty which would hold transnational corporations accountable for human rights abuses and violations of environmental standards.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	10.11.2015
Result of final vote	+ : 14 - : 9 0 : 0
Members present for the final vote	Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Ignazio Corrao, Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță, Nathan Gill, Charles Goerens, Enrique Guerrero Salom, Heidi Hautala, Maria Heubuch, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Linda McAvan, Norbert Neuser, Cristian Dan Preda, Lola Sánchez Caldentey, Elly Schlein, Pedro Silva Pereira, Davor Ivo Stier, Paavo Väyrynen, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Rainer Wieland, Anna Záborská
Substitutes present for the final vote	Louis-Joseph Manscour, Paul Rübig, Joachim Zeller