

Resolution on child slavery in Haiti

2018/2562(RSP) - 08/02/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on child slavery in Haiti.

The resolution was tabled by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Parliament called for an end to the Restavek phenomenon, a Creole term signifying the use of children as domestic workers, which affects approximately 400 000 children in Haiti, 60 % of whom are girls. It noted that Restavekism is systematic throughout Haiti and exists mainly due to the harsh economic conditions and cultural attitudes towards children. It deplored the fact that large numbers of children in Haiti are forcibly removed from their families as part of this phenomenon and are subjected to forced labour. The EU and its Member States were called upon to further help Haiti implement measures that protect children, including programmes and partnerships aimed at combating violence, abuse and child exploitation. Greater attention should be given to the well-being and rehabilitation of Restavek children within the framework of the next EDF and Haitian National Indicative Programme, including through a regular joint progress report on measures taken and their effectiveness in combatting the Restavek phenomenon.

Parliament called on the Haitian government to:

- prioritise legislative measures, namely a reform of the Criminal Code, to combat such issues;
- urgently implement measures to address the vulnerabilities that lead to child domestic servitude, including protecting children who are victims of neglect, abuse, violence and child labour;
- establish sufficiently resourced procedures to end the Restavek practice, including the training of social services to help place Restavek children away from abusive families and provide rehabilitation to meet their physical and psychological needs;
- put in place an administrative system which guarantees that all newborn children are registered at birth, as well as measures to register those who were not registered at birth and to register where they reside;
- shift major resources currently spent on expensive but poor quality orphanage institutions to community-based services that strengthen the abilities of families and communities to care adequately for their own children.