



Trade pact with Peru and Colombia: Trade MEPs want stronger labour protection

Committees: Committee on International Trade

The international trade committee called in a resolution on the EU's trade pact with Peru and Colombia for a binding road map to ensure labour, human rights and environmental protection to accompany the deal.

The resolution, adopted on Tuesday by 21 votes to four, with three abstentions, raises concerns about "a weakening of the current binding conditions" on trade and sustainable development. It calls on the Peruvian and Colombian governments to establish a transparent and binding roadmap to protect trade unionists, human rights and the environment.

Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining must be guaranteed, along with strict labour inspections leading to penalties if workers are mistreated. The Commission must begin immediately to assist Colombia and Peru in this process, says the committee.

"We strongly support the trade agreement with Colombia and Peru, which is a real opportunity to promote economic integration and development and raise living standards in the Andean Region, but we have adopted this resolution to express our concerns on human and labour rights and sustainable development and also to enhance the participation of civil society in their monitoring", explained co-rapporteur Mario David (PT, EPP) after the vote.

Co-rapporteur Bernd Lange (DE, S&D) said the purpose of the resolution was to pressurise the governments of Colombia and Peru to step up their efforts. He added that without measurable progress towards binding roadmaps, he found it hard to promise Parliament's full support for the agreement.

The trade committee praises the Colombian and Peruvian governments' "vast efforts" and fundamental improvements in law enforcement but says substantial work is still needed to "solve old problems", such as poverty, corruption, violence and particularly the murders of trade unionists, for which Colombia still has the highest rate in the world, with 90% of these crimes still unpunished.

Background

The trade agreement between the EU on the one hand and Peru and Colombia on the other provides for total trade liberalization in industrial products and fisheries and could increase Colombian GDP by 1.3% and Peruvian GDP by 0.7%. Parliament must consent to the agreement before it can enter in force and is scheduled to vote on this in plenary in the autumn.

In the chair: Vital Moreira (S&D, PT)

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