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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Antolín Sánchez Presedo, Jan Andersson, Erika Mann and Stephen Hughes

on behalf of the PSE Group

on the European Union's Generalised System of Preferences

European Parliament resolution on the European Union's Generalised System of Preferences

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 980/2005¹ of 27 June 2005 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences,
 - having regard to Commission Decision 2005/924/EC² on the list of the beneficiary countries which qualify for the special incentive arrangements for sustainable development and good governance provided for by Article 26(e) of Council Regulation (EC) No 980/2005 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the special incentive arrangements for sustainable development and good governance (GSP+) involve granting preferential access to European markets for goods originating in developing countries implementing certain international standards in human and labour rights, environmental protection, the fight against drugs and good governance,
- B. whereas the criteria for obtaining tariff preferences under GSP+ include ratification and effective implementation of core ILO conventions on freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination in employment and elimination of child and forced labour, as listed in Part A of Annex III of the Regulation,
- C. whereas the Commission, in its decision of 21 December 2005, granted special incentive arrangements to Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Sri Lanka, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, El Salvador and Venezuela,
- D. whereas most of these countries were former beneficiaries of the previous GSP scheme's special incentive arrangements to combat drug production and trafficking and encourage protection of labour rights,
- E. whereas all the countries granted GSP+ have ratified the relevant conventions listed in Annex III of the Regulation, including the recent ratification by El Salvador of the two remaining ILO conventions,
- F. whereas the effectiveness of the implementation of the relevant UN and ILO conventions should be regularly assessed on the basis of the conclusions of relevant monitoring bodies, including the ILO, and with due regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,
- G. whereas, under Article 16 of the GSP Regulation, safeguard clauses and temporary

¹ OJ L 169, 30.6.2005, p. 1.

² OJ L 337, 22.12.2005, p. 50.

withdrawals can be applied to countries that commit serious and systematic violations of the principles laid down in the international conventions listed in Part A of Annex III of the Regulation,

- H. whereas any temporary withdrawal should be applied in accordance with the procedure set out in Articles 18 and 19 of the Regulation,
1. Notes the decision by the Commission to grant preferences under the GSP+ scheme to the countries listed in Commission Decision 2005/924/EC;
 2. Notes that, despite their ratification of the relevant ILO conventions, repeated infringements in relation to workers' rights have been reported as occurring in many of those countries and that if these infringements are found to constitute serious and systematic violation of the ILO's core labour rights they could, as laid down in Article 16 of the Regulation, provide grounds for temporary withdrawal of GSP+ preferences;
 3. Calls on the Commission to strengthen its monitoring of the implementation of ILO conventions in GSP+ beneficiary countries and, in particular, to carry out its obligations under Article 18 of the Regulation, namely to inform the Generalised Preferences Committee of the reported infringements of labour rights and to consult on whether an investigation should be carried out into the existence of serious and systematic violations of the ILO's core labour rights conventions;
 4. Stresses particularly the need to provide adequate resources to, and cooperate effectively in this field with, the ILO and other relevant bodies, including trade unions; requests that the Commission make recommendations to the beneficiary governments concerned and stress that their failure to demonstrate progress towards effective implementation could lead to temporary withdrawal of GSP+ privileges;
 5. Notes that the economic development and integration into the world trade system of 'GSP Plus' beneficiary countries is also crucial to achieving development objectives, including stability and good governance; underlines, in this regard, that economic operators from both the EU and 'GSP Plus' beneficiary countries require a stable and predictable commercial and investment regime; notes, in this context, that economic operators should also be made responsible for infringements in accordance with the principle of proportionality;
 6. Welcomes the recent ratification by El Salvador of four ILO conventions on core labour standards relating to freedom of association, freedom to organise and collective bargaining; acknowledges the instrumental role of the trade unions in persuading the Salvadorian government to ratify those conventions and calls for their swift implementation;
 7. Asks the Commission to keep Parliament regularly informed of the results of its monitoring process concerning the implementation of the UN and ILO conventions and the level of compliance by GSP+ beneficiary countries, especially in the areas of freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination in employment and elimination of child and forced labour;

8. Calls on the Commission to inform Parliament at an early stage about any recommendation for a temporary withdrawal of preferences in accordance with Article 16 of the Regulation;
9. Insists that a thorough assessment of the effectiveness of implementation of core ILO conventions must be carried out before any renewal of the GSP+ preferences can be granted at the expiry of the current Regulation in 2008; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that Parliament's views on the extension of GSP+ scheme to specific countries are taken into account;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.