



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Plenary sitting

9.1.2013

B7-0005/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and the Commission

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on recent casualties in textile factory fires, notably in Bangladesh
(2012/2908(RSP))

Phil Bennion

on behalf of the ALDE Group

B7-0005/2013

**European Parliament resolution on recent casualties in textile factory fires, notably in Bangladesh
(2012/2908(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,
 - having regard to the United Nations Global Compact,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Bangladesh is the second-largest garment manufacturer in the world, with around 4 500 factories employing more than two million people;
- B. whereas clothes account for up to 80 % of Bangladesh's USD 24 billion (GBP 15 billion) annual exports;
- C. whereas it is estimated by the Clean Clothes Campaign that up to 700 people have died in factory fires in Bangladesh since 2006, many of which could have been prevented or losses mitigated if safety standards had been applied;
- D. whereas 289 people recently died at a garment factory in Karachi, and a blaze at a factory in Lahore claimed the lives of at least 25 people;
1. Regrets the tragic loss of life in workplace fires in Bangladesh, Pakistan and elsewhere in South Asia, in particular the recent fire on 24 November 2012 in Dhaka, which killed at least 112 people, and a factory fire in Karachi that killed at least 289 people;
 2. Notes that many of these tragic deaths could have been prevented had factories met basic safety standards;
 3. Notes the findings of the panel investigation by the Government of Bangladesh, which concluded that the incident in Dhaka was the result of sabotage; notes, however, the views of many NGOs in Bangladesh which have expressed their concerns with these findings;
 4. Regrets that some companies initially sought to deny working with the company involved in the Dhaka fire, only later acknowledging that their clothes had been produced at the site;
 5. Abhors the fact that poor or non-existent fire evacuation facilities seem to be commonplace in high-risk factories in Bangladesh and across South Asia;
 6. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh, the Government of Pakistan and others to do much more to enforce the right of workers to a safe working environment and to put in place adequate inspections to check fire safety in large industrial units;

7. Highlights the urgent need to ensure that independent inspections are implemented by trained fire safety experts not controlled by the brands or the factories being inspected, with public reporting of the results of all inspections and mandatory repairs and renovations to address all identified hazards;
8. Notes allegations of endemic corruption in many South Asian nations between health and safety inspectors and factory owners and calls for more to be done to combat such practices;
9. Welcomes initiatives currently being delivered by the European Commission aimed at providing support to improve factory safety in Bangladesh, for example through the 'Promotion of Labour Standards in the RMG sector' project, as well as joint work with the Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence Directorate; calls for such cooperation to be strengthened and expanded to include neighbouring countries, as appropriate;
10. Calls on multinational companies, apparel brands and retailers to join the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Agreement, a first step that should in due course be developed further, and similar projects in other countries, which can help provide a framework of measures to help prevent future disasters;
11. Calls on multinational companies, retailers, NGOs and all the other actors involved, including as appropriate the Commission, to work together to look at developing a labelling standard to ensure that a product was manufactured in line with fundamental working conditions; notes that this would also ensure that consumers are provided with more information with regard to the manufacture of a product;
12. Believes that companies operating in this sector all over South Asia and elsewhere have a responsibility to help raise safety standards in the factories they select to produce their goods;
13. Notes the important role that can be played by workers and unions, for example the continued development of worker-led safety committees in all factories and the importance of access to factories for unions to educate workers on how they can protect their rights and their safety, including their right to refuse unsafe work;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the European External Action Service, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, 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.