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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

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

on labour conditions and health and safety standards following the recent
factory fires and building collapse in Bangladesh
(2013/2638(RSP))

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European Parliament resolution on labour conditions and health and safety standards following the recent factory fires and building collapse in Bangladesh (2013/2638(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Bangladesh, in particular those of 17 January 2013¹, 6 September 2007² and 10 July 2008³,
- having regard to its resolutions of 25 November 2010 on human rights and social and environmental standards in international trade agreements⁴ and on corporate social responsibility in international trade agreements⁵,
- having regard to the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Partnership and Development⁶,
- having regard to the joint statement of 30 April 2013 by VP/HR Catherine Ashton and EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled 'A renewed EU strategy 2011-2014 for Corporate Social Responsibility' (COM(2011)0681),
- having regard to the ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health (2006, C-187) and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention (1981, C-155), which have not been ratified by Bangladesh, as well as their respective recommendations (R-197); having regard also to the Labour Inspection Convention (1947, C-081), to which Bangladesh is a signatory, and its recommendations (R-164),
- having regard to the Labour Inspection Convention (1947, C-081), to which Bangladesh and Pakistan are signatories, and its recommendations (R-164),
- having regard to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,
- having regard to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises,
- having regard to the conclusions of the ILO high-level mission to Bangladesh of 1-4 May 2013,
- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the EU has good, long-standing relations with Bangladesh, including through the

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0027.

² OJ C 187 E, 24.7.2008, p. 240.

³ OJ C 294 E, 3.12.2009, p. 77.

⁴ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 31.

⁵ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 101

⁶ OJ L 118, 27.4.2001, p. 48.

Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development, and whereas the EU is Bangladesh's leading commercial partner;

- B. whereas the National Tripartite Action Plan on Fire Safety for the Ready-Made Garment Sector in Bangladesh, of March 2013, provides a platform for coordination for stakeholders that wish to initiate additional fire safety promotion activities;
- C. whereas exporting garment products is one of the most important sources of revenue for the Bangladeshi economy, amounting annually to around EUR 15.3 billion;
- D. whereas there are more than 5 000 textile factories in Bangladesh, employing approximately 3,5 million people;
- E. whereas, on 24 April 2013, the Rana Plaza, a building in Savar, outside Dhaka, housing several garment factories collapsed, causing the loss of 1 127 lives and injury to more than 2 500 people;
- F. whereas the collapsed building was constructed illegally and did not meet safety standards;
- G. whereas the fact that workers were sent back into the building by the factory owners after cracks had appeared in the building the day before the collapse also gravely increased the high death toll;
- H. whereas a few days later, on 8 May, a fire in the Tung Hai garment factory, in the Mirpur district of Dhaka, cost the lives of eight people;
- I. whereas on 24 November 2012 a fire in the Tazreen factory, a garment factory in the Ashulia industrial belt of Dhaka, cost the lives of at least 112 people, and 200 others were injured in the accident;
- J. whereas, although an official enquiry concluded that the reason for the Tazreen fire was an act of sabotage, the high death toll was caused by inadequate safety measures, including overcrowding, lack of emergency exits and locked existing exit gates, as well as by a faulty emergency response at management level;
- K. whereas, although a government enquiry committee formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Labour Ministry came to the conclusion that criminal charges for unpardonable negligence should be brought against the owner of the Tazreen factory, he was never arrested; whereas a petition was filed at the Bangladesh High Court on 28 April 2013 accusing the authorities of inactivity and seeking his arrest;
- L. whereas, in the four weeks after the Tazreen fire, 17 additional conflagrations have broken out in Bangladeshi textile and garment factories;

- M. whereas working conditions in Bangladeshi factories are very often poor, with little or no enforcement of safety laws, overcrowding and minimal safeguards against fire and industrial accidents, as well as restrictions on freedom of association and inhumane pay levels;
- N. whereas hundreds of workers die every year in similar accidents all over Bangladesh and South Asia;
1. Expresses its deep sorrow at the loss of life suffered in the recent building collapse and factory fires; extends its condolences to those injured as well to the bereaved families;
 2. Urges the Bangladeshi Government immediately to develop effective fire and building safety rules in accordance with ILO standards and subsequently to ensure that they are strictly and effectively enforced by local manufacturers;
 3. Welcomes the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh between a number of trade unions, NGOs and multinational textile retailers, which contains binding and transparent provisions aimed at improving safety standards at production sites and agrees to pay for such measures, in particular by establishing an independent inspection system and actively supporting the creation of Health and Safety Committees involving workers' representations in each factory, which are obligatory by law but rarely operational; calls on all relevant textile brands to join this effort;
 4. Calls on all businesses, notably garment brands, that contract or subcontract to factories in Bangladesh and other countries to fully adhere to internationally recognised corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and to critically investigate their supply chains in order to ensure that their goods are produced exclusively in factories fully respecting safety standards and labour rights;
 5. Calls on major international garment brands to cooperate with their subcontractors to improve occupational health, safety and labour standards; calls on retailers, NGOs and all other actors involved, including where appropriate the Commission, to work together to develop a voluntary social labelling standard certifying that a product has been manufactured in accordance with ILO core labour standards;
 6. Expects those responsible for criminal negligence and otherwise criminally responsible in relation to the collapse of Rana Plaza, the Tazreen factory fire and all other fires to be brought to justice; expects local authorities and factory management to cooperate in order to guarantee full access to the justice system for all victims, so as to enable them to claim compensation; expects multinational textile retailers that were producing at these factories to be involved in the establishment of a financial compensation plan; welcomes the steps which have already been taken by the Bangladeshi Government to support the victims and their families;
 7. Calls on the Commission to consider using its trade policy instruments, including through the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), to encourage the enforcement of international safety standards and ILO core labour standards, as well as the development of decent sectoral minimum wages in Bangladesh;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Human Rights Council, the Government and Parliament of Bangladesh and the Director-General of the ILO.