

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2798/06
by Jonas Sjöstedt (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Persistence of poor working conditions in China

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU, gives a disturbing description of conditions in China in its latest annual report. A life-threatening working environment, long working hours and large-scale protests are seen as significant factors in working life in China.

Parliament has urged China in previous resolutions to adopt international conventions on civil and political rights and to allow the formation of free trade unions. The EU Commissioner responsible for trade has also insisted on the importance of ILO conventions and of creating clear mechanisms for their application.

Despite this situation, the speech on future opportunities given by Peter Mandelson at Renmin University in Beijing on 8 June 2006 did not touch on the question of free trade unions and the wretched conditions for labour in China.

How does the Commission believe that support can be given to socially sustainable development in China unless questions concerning free trade unions and violations of human rights are raised as issues of prime importance in relations with Chinese representatives?