

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2799/06  
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to the Commission

Subject: Textile industry crisis in developing countries

On 7 June 2006, the Swedish evening newspaper Expressen described the slave-like conditions in the textile factories of Cambodia. Children work in gigantic factories to produce textile and clothing products day and night for, among others, the European market. Starvation wages, forced labour and exhaustion are common descriptions. At the same time, there is a risk that this negative trend will increase more and more as suppliers demand lower costs with the threat that, otherwise, products will be bought from China, where costs are even lower.

There are also other reports of growing discontent in Bangladesh where textile factories have been closed down after large-scale protests in which violent clashes took place between police and demonstrators.

Parliament's resolution of 13 October 2005 'urges the Commission to meet the growing unease of developing countries about the effects on their markets of Chinese textile exports by urgently conducting a country-by-country assessment of the full impact of the quota phase-out.'

In the light of the above, how has the Commission elected to meet the unease that exists in many developing countries, and what action has the Commission taken to combat the trend towards even worse conditions for the people performing the work?