

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5859/06
by Margrietus van den Berg (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Child slavery in cocoa production

In producing cocoa - the basic raw material for chocolate, which is so popular in the West - much use is made of forced labour by children. Particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, where 40% of worldwide cocoa production is located, child slavery exists on a massive scale. Many children from neighbouring countries in West Africa are among the victims. It is estimated that tens of thousands of children are working in cocoa production against their will and without payment. In many cases this is because cocoa producers are so poorly paid, as a result of which they do not hire adult labourers. While cocoa farmers receive barely 30 euro cents per kilo, consumers often pay more than € 8 per kilo. This calls for a special chocolate Christmas wreath initiative!

1. Will the Commission take the initiative to seek a ban on child labour jointly with the cocoa industry?
2. Will the Commission impose a European ban on imports of products produced with the aid of child labour?
3. Will the Commission introduce a system of preferential access to the European market for cocoa products which are made without violating social standards relating to child labour - a type of GSP+?