

**Question for written answer E-005948/2012
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Bonded (child) labour of Dalit girls in garment production of EU-based companies

Various reports have been published in the last few years on the involvement of European and US garment brands and retailers in garment production in South India, where at least 100 000 girls and young women – mostly of Dalit ('untouchable') or low caste background – work under recruitment and employment schemes that amount to bonded labour. Recently the report 'Maid in India' by SOMO and the India Committee of the Netherlands provided evidence that 37 EU-based companies are sourcing from four large Tamil Nadu-based garment manufacturers where these and related human rights violations are taking place. Following on from an earlier report entitled 'Captured by Cotton', which was published in May 2011, some improvements have been made as a result of pressure from active buyers, NGOs, etc., but according to 'Maid in India', major abuses continue to occur.

1. Is the Vice President / High Representative willing to raise this corporate social responsibility- (CSR) and human rights-related issue – which concerns numerous European companies – with the Indian Government, with a view to working on a joint solution?
2. Is the VP/HR willing to raise this issue with the EU-based companies involved in order to come up with a joint plan of action, to monitor its implementation and to report the results achieved to Parliament every year?
3. Is the VP/HR, in view of the Commission's criteria for effective self- and co-regulation processes on CSR (point 4.3. of the EU strategy 2011-2014 on CSR), willing to work with the garment industry as a pilot in order to develop a code of good practice for self- and co-regulation exercises (point of action 5 of CSR strategy)?
4. Is the VP/HR, in view of the Commission's endorsement of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, willing to demand full supply-chain transparency from the European garment industry, for example as the Dutch Parliament has recently demanded in a motion?
5. Is the VP/HR willing to bring up this case in the context of the EU-India free-trade negotiations as input for the discussion about the sustainability chapter and how issues like this should be dealt with under the EU-India free trade agreement?