



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on International Trade

2010/2205(INI)

17.3.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on International Trade

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the external dimension of social policy, promoting labour and social standards and European corporate social responsibility
(2010/2205(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Tokia Saïfi

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Recalls that the EU has set itself the objective not only of becoming a pole of excellence on Corporate Social Responsibility but also of promoting CSR in its external policies; acknowledges the Commission's efforts in promoting CSR best practices among European companies operating abroad, but underlines that it should take better account of the importance of certifications and labels that demonstrate the compliance of enterprises with CSR principles;
2. Considers that failure to comply with basic international social standards constitutes a form of social and environmental dumping detrimental to European enterprises and workers;
3. Considers it necessary to enhance the role of the relevant international institutions (particularly the ILO, WTO, OECD and United Nations) and seek their cooperation in the development, implementation and promotion of basic international social standards and corresponding penalties;
4. Calls on the Commission to systematically include a chapter on sustainable development, containing a legally binding CSR clause, in the free trade and investment agreements it negotiates with third countries;
5. Proposes that this CSR clause cover compliance with the ILO's eight core conventions and four priority conventions and also provide incentives to enterprises to enter into CSR commitments and an obligation of diligence for enterprises and groups of enterprises, i.e. an obligation to take proactive measures to identify and prevent any violation of human or environmental rights, corruption or tax evasion, including in their subsidiaries and supply chains (i.e. their sphere of influence);
6. Calls also on the Commission, during the negotiations, to adapt the level of its requirements to the degree of development of each partner country; proposes in this context that the Commission draw up a list of additional standards, which should be introduced gradually and flexibly, taking account of the economic, social and environmental situation of the partner concerned;
7. Considers that, both in the territory of the partner country and in the Member States, the implementation of these basic standards should be subject to continuous monitoring by independent bodies and that their non-enforcement or infringement, established on the basis of predetermined criteria, should be penalised by means of effective and transparent procedures;
8. Considers that these standards should be applied in full and that neither free zones nor host country agreements can be used to escape them;
9. Emphasises that, given the size of their share of international trade, European companies

and their subsidiaries and subcontractors play a key role in the promotion and dissemination of social and labour standards worldwide, and that they should therefore act in accordance with European values and internationally recognised standards; considers that it would be right and proper for European enterprises which relocate their production to countries with less stringent social obligations to be held liable, including before European courts, for any damage and negative externalities affecting local populations;

10. Believes that the Commission should, in its future communication on the internationalisation of SMEs' activities, propose measures that help support and promote SME initiatives in the field of CSR which respect the 'think small first' principle and take account of their specific circumstances.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	16.3.2011
Result of final vote	+: 23 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	William (The Earl of) Dartmouth, Laima Liucija Andrikiene, Kader Arif, David Campbell Bannerman, Daniel Caspary, Christofer Fjellner, Metin Kazak, Bernd Lange, David Martin, Emilio Menéndez del Valle, Vital Moreira, Cristiana Muscardini, Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl, Niccolò Rinaldi, Tokia Saïfi, Helmut Scholz, Peter Šťastný, Robert Sturdy, Gianluca Susta, Keith Taylor, Iuliu Winkler, Pablo Zalba Bidegain, Paweł Zalewski
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Catherine Bearder, George Sabin Cutaş, Syed Kamall, Elisabeth Köstinger, Miloslav Ransdorf, Michael Theurer