

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0093/06

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Enrique Barón Crespo, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade  
to the Commission

Subject: Granting of GSP plus preferences

Under its General System of Preferences (GSP), the EU supports developing countries by giving their goods easier access to its markets. The EU's recent GSP scheme was adopted on 27 June 2005, through Council Regulation (EC) No 980/2005<sup>1</sup>, and will be effective until the end of 2008. This regulation also envisages a special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance (the so-called 'GSP plus') which provides additional benefits for countries implementing certain international standards in human and labour rights, environmental protection, the fight against drugs, and good governance. Beneficiary countries commit themselves among other things to ratifying and implementing standards enshrined in Conventions by the United Nations' International Labour Organisation (UN/ILO).

The Commission in its decision of 21 December 2005 has decided to grant special incentives to 15 states. Allegedly, in some of them, there are flaws in the implementation of the principles laid down in the UN/ILO Conventions, especially those which protect freedom of association, collective bargaining, non-discrimination in employment and ending of child and forced labour.

- Could the Commission inform the European Parliament about the effectiveness of the implementation of the ILO conventions by the GSP plus beneficiary countries?
- How does the Commission monitor and control the implementation of the GSP plus ILO/UN Conventions? How is the position of the beneficiary countries taken into account in the regular process of control and monitoring?
- On the basis of the conclusion of the relevant monitoring bodies, are there, in any of the current GSP plus beneficiary countries, serious and systematic violations of the principles laid down in the Conventions listed in Part A of Annex III which, according to Article 16 of Council Regulation (EC) No 980/2005, would justify a temporary withdrawal of preferences?

Tabled: 06.09.2006

Forwarded: 08.09.2006

Deadline for reply: 15.09.2006

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 169, 30.6.2005, p.1.