

## **PODCAST on Human rights in EU trade policy**

**Voice 1: Brian**

**Voice 2: Sarah**

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VOICE 1

You're listening to the European Parliamentary Research Service podcast on Human rights in EU trade policy.

VOICE 2

Having preferential access to the EU market comes with an important condition for developing countries: respect for human rights. But the European Parliament wants to go further and ban imports of goods produced with child labour. We'll tell you more in this podcast!

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VOICE 1

Ensuring that human rights are respected as much around the world as in Europe is a core principle of the European Union and its external action.

VOICE 2

This is why since 1995, the EU has included a “human-rights clause” in all bilateral free trade agreements with partners from the rest of the world, allowing one party to suspend the agreement (or part of it) if human rights, democracy and fundamental freedoms are not respected by the other party.

#### VOICE 1

And with an internal market of over 500 million consumers, the EU has found an effective way to ensure developing countries pay greater attention to respecting human rights... granting them unilateral preferential trade access to this huge market upon the condition that they respect human rights and basic labour rights norms.

#### VOICE 2

And those which ratify and implement core international conventions on human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance get extra tariff concessions!

#### VOICE 1

But preferences can be suspended in case of massive and systemic violations of human rights, as has happened with Belarus, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, although there are serious doubts as to whether the stick had any immediate and clear impact...

#### VOICE 2

In the view of the Commission, which holds the stick as the initiator of sanctions, fear of losing preferential access to the EU market should act as a deterrent against human rights abuses, and sanctions should only be used as a last resort.

VOICE 1

But the European Parliament and civil society favour a tougher “stick approach”... and have called for a stronger, more consistent and clearer use of the human rights clause and related sanctions.

VOICE 2

MEPs have also strengthened the EU export ban on goods which may be used for torture and have asked for new laws to ban imports of goods produced with child labour.

VOICE 1

We'll be following discussions as human rights take centre stage in Strasbourg next week!

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