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## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on labour conditions and health and safety standards following the recent  
factory fires and building collapse in Bangladesh  
(2013/2638(RSP))

**Phil Bennion, Leonidas Donskis, Marielle de Sarnez, Sonia Alfano,  
Edward McMillan-Scott, Jean-Luc Bennahmias**  
on behalf of the ALDE Group

**European Parliament resolution on labour conditions and health and safety standards following the recent factory fires and building collapse in Bangladesh (2013/2638(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh,
- having regard to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work,
- having regard to the United Nations Global Compact,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2013 on the situation in Bangladesh<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 January 2013 on recent casualties in textile factory fires, notably in Bangladesh<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 February 2013 on ‘Corporate social responsibility: accountable, transparent and responsible business behaviour and sustainable growth’<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission’s Communication of 18 May 2004 entitled ‘The Social Dimension of Globalisation – the EU’s policy contribution on extending the benefits to all’ (COM(2004)0383),
- having regard to the Clean Clothes Campaign,
- having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas one third of Bangladesh’s 150 million people live in extreme poverty;
- B. whereas clothes account for up to 80 % of Bangladesh’s EUR 19 billion worth of annual exports;
- C. whereas there are more than 5 000 textile factories in Bangladesh, employing approximately 3.5 million people, making Bangladesh the world’s second largest exporter of ready-made clothes, next only to China;
- D. whereas the European market is the largest export destination for Bangladeshi apparel and textile products;
- E. whereas at least 112 people died at the Tazreen factory fire, in the Ashulia district of Dhaka, on 24 November 2012; whereas 8 people died in a factory fire in Dhaka on 8 May 2013; and whereas an estimated 600 garment workers have died in factory fires in Bangladesh alone since 2005 and before the tragedy of Rana Plaza;

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0100.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0027.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2013)0049

- F. whereas the United Nations Global Compact, an agreement composed of ten principles to which companies make a commitment and which they integrate into their business operations on a voluntary basis, asks corporations to commit to embracing, supporting, and enacting, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, core labour standards, the environment and the fight against corruption;
1. Expresses its sorrow at the tragic loss of 1 127 lives caused by the preventable collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka; extends its condolences to the victims' families and to those who were injured, and condemns the different actors responsible for failing to prevent yet another heavy loss of lives;
  2. Stresses that such accidents tragically highlight the lack of safety standards at production sites and prove that urgent action is needed to improve the implementation of ILO core labour standards and enhance respect for the principles of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the part of multinational textile retail companies;
  3. Welcomes the fact that numerous retail companies have signed the legally enforceable Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, entailing independent inspections, worker-led health and safety committees and union access to factories, but deplores the fact that a tragedy was needed for such action to be taken;
  4. Strongly urges those companies that have refused to sign the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh to reconsider their position and sign the accord without delay;
  5. Recalls that promoting CSR is an objective supported by the European Union, and that the Commission takes the view that the Union must ensure that the external policies it implements make a genuine contribution to the sustainable development, and to the social development, of the countries concerned, and that the actions of European corporations wherever they invest and operate are in accordance with European values and internationally agreed norms;
  6. Believes that the safety accord is a first step, but that more decisive actions are needed to pave the way for historic change in the Bangladeshi textile industry; calls for the accord to be implemented as soon as possible; recalls that Bangladesh is not the only country to be faced with such tragedies, and believes that retailers should have a coherent international strategy on CSR;
  7. Calls on major international garment brands to investigate their supply chains with a critical eye, to cooperate with their subcontractors to improve occupational health and safety standards, and to ensure that an adequate level of safety standards is applied in the production of goods exported from Bangladesh;
  8. Deeply regrets the failure of the Bangladeshi Government to enforce national building regulations; calls on the Government and the relevant judicial authorities to investigate the allegations that those regulations were not implemented owing to collusion between corrupt officials and landlords seeking to reduce their costs;
  9. Calls on the Government of Bangladesh to implement the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, proactively and with immediate effect, and in particular by helping

to educate workers on how they can protect their rights and their safety, including their right to refuse unsafe work;

10. Asks the Commission to monitor the implementation of the accord and related initiatives; takes the view that if unsatisfactory progress is made, the European Union should consider what further measures could be taken to help facilitate action, including the possibility of specific trade restrictions, for example through the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) – through which Bangladesh currently receives duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market under the ‘Everything But Arms’ scheme – in order to create incentives for the responsible management of supply chains involving developing countries;
11. Calls on the Commission actively to promote responsible business conduct among EU companies operating abroad, with a special focus on ensuring strict compliance with all their legal obligations, in particular international standards and rules in the areas of human rights, labour and the environment; notes that companies using CSR as a marketing tool should take steps to ensure that any claims made are accurate;
12. Calls on multinational companies, retailers, NGOs and all other involved actors – including, as appropriate, the Commission – to work together with a view to developing a labelling standard to ensure that labelled products are manufactured in accordance with ILO core labour standards, and to strengthen controls over compliance with such labels; notes that this would also ensure that consumers are provided with more information about the manufacture of a product;
13. Deplores the Commission’s intention to withdraw the proposal for a regulation on the indication of the country of origin for certain products imported from third countries; stresses the importance of the proposal as a means of giving value to high-quality production and environmental and social standards;
14. Welcomes the recent reforms initiated by the Bangladeshi Government, including the long overdue decision, as part of the Tripartite Action plan, to allow the country’s 4 million garment workers to form trade unions without permission from factory owners;
15. Welcomes the proposals of the Tripartite partners as regards a labour law reform package, an assessment of structural building safety and fire safety standards at all active garment factories in Bangladesh, to be completed by the end of 2013, and an array of immediate measures, such as the relocation of unsafe factories; stresses the importance of adopting and implementing such proposals;
16. Supports the Tripartite partners in their call on the ILO to launch a skills and training programme for injured workers following the tragedies at Tazreen Fashions Ltd, Smart Export Garments and Rana Plaza;
17. Regrets that Bangladesh has so far refused to sign ILO conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining or Conventions 29 and 105 on combating and abolishing forced labour;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Vice-President of the

Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EU Special Representative on Human Rights, the governments and parliaments of Bangladesh and Pakistan, and the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation.