

[Press release – Textile imports: MEPs push for EU rules to curb worker exploitation](#)

EU rules are needed to oblige textile and clothing suppliers to respect workers' rights, say MEPs in a resolution adopted on Thursday.

Textile workers around the world, many of whom are young women and children, suffer long working hours, low wages, uncertainty, violence and hazardous conditions. These practices also harm the EU industry, as they result in social dumping, MEPs note in a non-binding resolution.

In an effort to push the “flagship initiative” aimed at preventing tragedies like the April 2013 Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh, MEPs suggest a series of measures:

- **due diligence obligations:** the EU Commission should table a binding legislative proposal for a due diligence system, based on [OECD guidelines](#) and similar to those for the so-called blood minerals, that covers the whole supply chain,
- **conditional trade preferences:** the EU should ensure that textile exporting countries with preferential access to the EU market comply with obligations and produce sustainable textiles, while member states should promote workers' rights in their relations with partner countries,

Quote by lead MEP

“We cannot turn a blind eye, if our clothes are made at the cost of vast human suffering. Only binding rules could guarantee that products sold on European markets do not violate the dignity and the rights of millions of workers. The EU has the means to act and we ask the Commission to do so.” said rapporteur Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL, ES).

The resolution was adopted by 505 votes against 49 with 57 abstentions.

Background

According to the World Trade Organisation, more than 70% of EU textiles and clothing imports come from Asia, with China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia as the largest producers. Most buyers are global brands looking for low prices and tight production timeframes and the consequences usually fall upon factory workers. After the Rana Plaza tragedy, in which over 1,100 people died when a factory building collapsed in Dhaka,

Bangladesh, the EU Commission promised to bring forward an EU wide flagship initiative, but has so far failed to do so. Parliament wants to encourage the Commission to table this package of proposals.

Procedure: non-legislative resolution