

21 October 2005

Textiles: current situation

The recent revision of the memorandum of understanding with China on trade and textiles, only three months after its formal signature, revealed major Commission weaknesses. The textile 'invasion' from January 2005 onwards was perfectly foreseeable, and the Commission had made no preparations for it, nor did it react swiftly enough, worsening the conditions under which the European producers in the sector were struggling to adjust.

The following five questions therefore arise: 1. The Commission has continued to regulate production conditions in the EU (see the REACH Directive). What specific plans does the Commission have to ensure that the opening-up of European markets goes, de facto, hand in hand with international compliance with minimum regulations in the areas of human, environmental and labour rights? What priority, within international agreements, has the Commission assigned to the goal of using the European Union's weight as a great world power in commercial terms (which it unquestionably still is), to ensure that minimum standards with regard to protecting fundamental values are accepted and complied with internationally, as an integral part of the new globalised context?

2. The High Level Group recommended, and the Commission accepted, a package of actions and policies designed to facilitate conversion and expedite the task of making Europe's textile regions competitive again. What specific stage has been reached with each and every one of these initiatives, and to what extent are they affected by the adoption of the 2007-2013 financial perspective?

3. What guarantees is the Commission giving us that the September agreement will not meet the same fate as that of June? What powers and/or willpower has the Commission come up with in the mean time to back up the September agreement and ensure that it is honoured?

4. Given that the problems of footwear are very similar to those of the textile industry, can the Commission confirm rumours that anti-dumping measures are in preparation, to be implemented from 2006? If European businesses, whether importers or producers, are going to be able to do a minimum of strategic planning, it is essential that explicit details of such measures be made available in good time.

5. The Commission participated in and co-funded the recent EU-China Business Summit which involved the presence of a significant delegation of businessmen who established contacts with Chinese official bodies and businessmen. What criteria were used when selecting the European companies involved? Which Portuguese companies were represented?

Answer:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2005-3850&language=EN>