

**August 30, 2017**

**Parliamentary Question for written answer to the European Commission**

Rule 130

**Anne-Marie Mineur (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Research report by Landelijke India Werkgroep (India Committee of the Netherlands) and Stop Kinderarbeid (Stop Child Labour) on conditions in Indian granite quarries

1. Is the Commission aware of the research report by the Landelijke India Werkgroep and the Stichting Stop Kinderarbeid on modern-day slavery, child labour and unsafe work in granite quarries in India<sup>1</sup>?
2. What is its response to the findings of the research, namely that modern-day slavery exists, that the health and safety of workers are seriously endangered, that child labour exists and that workers are underpaid and live in poor housing?
3. What practical measures will the Commission take with regard to its recommendations to the EU? In addition: will the Commission draft a proposal with the aim of introducing a due diligence requirement for businesses relating to granite, by analogy with the Timber Regulation and the regulation on conflict minerals<sup>2</sup>? If not, why not?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/TheDarkSitesOfGranite.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council

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**November 27, 2017**

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E-005356/2017

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission

1. The Commission is aware of the mentioned report and acknowledges the unacceptable working conditions in granite quarries in India.
2. The Commission is firmly committed to eliminate child and forced labour. To this aim it has been working in a multidimensional approach to address labour abuses through various instruments and stakeholders. As the main donor to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the EU has helped to increase ratifications and enforcements of the ILO Fundamental Conventions<sup>1</sup> by partner countries, including India. Special efforts are devoted to the 2014 Protocol<sup>2</sup> for its rapid ratification and enforcement.

Other EU external actions contribute to increase family livelihood and further reduce child labour. These include support to improve social protection systems, better working conditions and access to education and decent jobs in particular for children and youth<sup>3</sup> respectively. The Commission will continue tackling labour rights abuses in line with its commitment to the United Nations 2030 Agenda

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom of association and collective bargaining, Forced Labour (including the 2014 Protocol), Child Labour, Equality of opportunity and treatment

<sup>2</sup> P029 - Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930

<sup>3</sup> In India for example the EU has supported Bal Raksha, Bharat (Save the Children India) to build the capacities of local community-based groups to strengthen the protection of conflict-affected children and their families

and the New European Consensus for Development.

3. The Commission is proactive in promoting responsible business conduct through all its policies and expects that companies operating in partner countries respect human rights and labour standards. Furthermore, the Commission has already taken steps to ensure transparency and sustainability in complex global supply chains, by adopting an action to improve transparency and traceability in global value chains in the garment/cotton/textile industry. It also works with the OECD in developing due diligence guidelines and their implementation.

Technical cooperation to promote responsible value chains in the mineral sector, including conflict minerals, is ongoing in coordination with governments, other development partners and existing initiatives. The due diligence requirements under the Conflict Minerals Regulation<sup>4</sup> will become applicable for EU importers as of 1 January 2021. The Commission is currently not considering enlarging its scope.

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<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/821 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas.