

## Parliamentary questions

21 January 2013

E-000547-13

Question for written answer  
to the Commission  
Rule 117

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► Subject: Child labour and shoe production — follow-up

In his answer to Written Question [E-007450/2012](#), Commissioner de Gucht states that the 2012 EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights foresee the promotion of updated hazardous work lists under ILO Convention No 182. To which lists is the Commission referring: the lists of EU Member States and/or the lists of third countries with a child labour problem? When will these lists be updated?

The Commission refers to a comprehensive framework that addresses the root causes of child labour. Could the Commission explain how this framework can be applied to tackling child labour and labour rights violations, in particular in the global footwear industry?

According to the Commission's answer, it aims to incorporate corporate social responsibility (CSR) into trade/investment negotiations. What progress has been made on this issue in ongoing trade and investment negotiations?

According to a recent report on 'Child labour in the leather shoe sector — An analysis of CSR policy and practice of footwear companies', published by the Stop Child Labour campaign, only a few shoe companies in the European market effectively tackle child labour in their supply chain. What action is the Commission willing to take to encourage footwear companies to pay more attention to the problem of child labour in their supply chain?

In its answer, the Commission says that no further research is needed on involving stakeholders with regard to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. However, the question referred to specific research on child labour and human rights issues in the global footwear industry. Is the Commission willing to pursue such research, particularly with regard to the serious child labour and labour rights violations revealed by the country study on India by SOMO and Stop Child Labour?

## Parliamentary questions

14 March 2013

[E-000547/2013](#)

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission

The action plan adopted in 2012 with the new Strategic Framework on Human Rights, notably point 19d, hazardous lists, promotes the establishment of up-to-date hazardous work lists by International Labour Organisation (ILO) members, whether EU or not, in line with ILO Convention 182, Article 4.

A comprehensive and broad perspective in addressing root causes of child labour is needed as

the causes are normally several in each case even though interlinked. Poverty is the most important reason for child labour and needs to be addressed at several levels including but not limited to job creation, provision of social protection, school and education facilities and infrastructure. International trade is contributing to enhancing development and growth and therefore contributes to poverty eradication in a long term perspective.

In addition to the reply to previous Written Question [E-007450/2012](#), corporate social responsibility (CSR) is discussed in ongoing trade/investment negotiations.

The Commission is working with stakeholders to develop CSR human rights guidance for a limited number of industrial sectors, based on the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles. The guide will be applicable as globally as possible and should be relevant for a wider range of industrial sectors. The Commission has also accomplished a project to produce guidance material on Business and Human Rights for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to assist them with the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles. The Commission is furthermore developing a code for self-regulation and co-regulation and in which the footwear industry would be welcome to participate.

The Commission continues to engage with stakeholders and follows relevant developments in this area.