



Improving working conditions in the global garment industry

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Our contribution to the EU Flagship initiative on garment



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2015 is the European year for development. In this context, the European commission want to launch an EU flagship initiative on responsible management of the supply chain in the garment sector. Clean Clothes Campaign accepted the invitation to contribute in the identification of this flagship initiative and to participate in an informal meeting with stakeholders gathered on 23 January in Brussels.

For the European Commission, “The issue of responsible supply chains touches upon several aspects of sustainable development ranging from safety at work, the use of chemicals, child labour, to 'living wages' and collective rights, including enforcement of appropriate national legislation and of international standards and commitments as well as many others issues more directly linked to the sustainable competitiveness of the EU companies involved in such supply chains. It is being proposed because it is close to citizens' concerns and expectations, partly due to the increased attention given to this issue following the tragedy of the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory building in April 2013, which revealed serious shortcomings in the occupational safety and labour conditions of Bangladeshi workers in the garment industry.”

Among other stakeholders, DG Development and EuropeAid invited specifically the Clean Clothes Campaign to contribute in the identification of this flagship initiative and to participate in an informal meeting with stakeholders gathered on 23 January in Brussels.

The Clean Clothes Campaign has accepted this invitation and welcome the intention of the European Commission to increase awareness about this issue, to consult all stakeholders by including them in the process and to aim at a better coordination between all actors involved. However, the Clean Clothes Campaign believes that an EU response in this field needs to deliver effective and long lasting solutions to the workers killed, injured or living in deep poverty in the global garment supply chain today.

For the Clean Clothes Campaign, this flagship initiative will only be considered a positive step if it deals with the following priorities and fields of work:

The initiative should contain, at least:

1. New legislation creating legal obligation that requires due diligence of EU companies also for their operations outside of Europe and that includes binding traceability and transparency,
2. Sufficient human and financial resources allocated for a strong lead by European institutions of this initiative,
3. Concrete answers to concrete problems, incl. compensation for Rana Plaza victims, fundamental rights for workers in Georgia, etc.
4. An effective access to justice mechanism for victims of workers' and human rights abuses in the garment sector
5. Coordination with other EU policies
 - a) Concerning garment industry based in the EU
 - b) In the area of trade (including EU trade preferences scheme as well as monitoring of association agreements with EU partner countries)
 - c) The adoption of a comprehensive initiative comparable to the FLEGT Action Plan in the area of textiles and garment that includes binding traceability and due diligence.

Read the full Clean Clothes Campaign contribution [here](#).

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