Press release | 09.06.2022

EU ready to finally ban all forced labour products

Today, the European Parliament will adopt two landmark resolutions to ensure respect for human rights in EU trade policy. The first calls for a new trade instrument that will ban the import into the EU market of all goods produced with forced labour, and which the Greens/EFA believe will be necessary to complement the upcoming due diligence legislation. The second resolution focuses on human rights in Xinjiang and the Xinjiang police files and calls again for a trade instrument to prohibit the import of goods produced with forced labour, while also calling for the strengthening of sanctions against Chinese leaders currently targeted by the EU as well as their extension to all individuals, or entities, identified in the Xinjiang police files.

Heidi Hautala MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament and Greens/EFA member of the International Trade and Human Rights committees, comments:

"Europeans demand a trade policy in line with EU values, human dignity and social rights. Under pressure from the Parliament, the Council and the Commission had to withdraw their support for the investment agreement with China. And today, the European Parliament is signaling that it no longer wants the EU to be complicit with the Chinese totalitarian regime, which has been perpetuating a crime against humanity in the Xinjiang province for five years.

"The EU is the second largest market for Chinese exports. By banning the import of forced labour products, we will finally act against exploitation and protect workers in China and Europe."

Sarah Matthieu MEP, Greens/EFA member of the Committee on International Trade:

"25 million people around the world are estimated to be victims of forced labour. This includes countries with which the EU is currently negotiating free trade agreements. The EU simply cannot allow the import of modern slavery products.

"Out of these 25 million, 6 to 10 million are estimated to be children. Moreover, the United Nations expects the situation to worsen as the pandemic and the war in Ukraine push more families into poverty."

More:

The Greens/EFA welcome the strong signal sent by the Parliament to the Commission to provide the EU with an instrument to combat forced labour. The Commission is expected to present a legislative proposal after the summer.

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