

**Written Questions European Parliament to the European Commission
about the report 'Tainted Carpets - Slavery and Child Labor in India's
Hand-Made Carpet Sector'**

Submitted 19-2-2014 by MEPs Peter van Dalen and Dennis de Jong

1. Are you aware of the report “Tainted Carpets - Slavery and Child Labor in India's Hand-Made Carpet Sector” of the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights of Harvard University?¹
2. How do you assess the fact that more than 20 years ago child labour and other abuses in the Indian carpet industry received extensive publicity, that since that time a number of voluntary initiatives have been undertaken but that the situation of carpet workers described in the report still is very dramatic and the vast majority of labour consists of forced labour and child labour under very unhealthy conditions and at extremely low wages?
3. Are you willing to examine the involvement of carpet importers and sellers – active in the European market – in slavery and child labour in the Indian carpet industry, including the companies IKEA and Wal-Mart who are listed in the report? What measures will you take to ensure that Indian carpets sold in the European market are made without slavery and child labour?
4. Are you willing to urge the Indian government to take effective action against slavery and child labour in the carpet industry and to undertake joint activities against these abuses?
5. Can European companies that are affiliated with labels like Goodweave, Rugmark and/or the Care & Fair initiative of the European carpet industry demonstrate with reasonable certainty that their carpets from India have not been made by slaves or children?
6. Are you willing to engage with European trade associations representing carpet importers and/or sellers of Indian carpets to discuss the need to take action against slavery and child labour in the production of the Indian carpets that they are buying or selling?

¹ See: <http://fxb.harvard.edu/tainted-carpets-report/>

Answer to written questions European Parliament to the European Commission about the report 'Tainted Carpets - Slavery and Child Labor in India's Hand-Made Carpet Sector' (submitted February 19, 2014),

given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission.

April 7, 2014

The Commission refers to the replies to written questions E-005948/2012, E-009096/2012 on India, E-013322/2013 on corporate social responsibility, E-13545/2013 regarding labelling and E-000021/2014 and E-013160/2013, regarding child labour.

The Commission Staff Working Document on Trade and the Worst Forms of Child Labour of 2013 provides a deeper look at the link between international trade and the worst forms of child labour. It is important to pursue a holistic approach addressing the root causes of child labour such as poverty eradication, access to education, social protection, etc.

The EU strongly supports the ratification and implementation of the fundamental Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), including the abolition of slavery and child labour. The Commission is also committed to implement the EU's long-term strategy on children's rights.

The Commission thanks the Honourable Members for drawing attention to a recent study on labour practices specifically in India's hand-made carpet sector. Given the existing work, including Commission Documents, the Commission has no plan to carry out a further sector-and country-specific study.

Combating child labour in India has been addressed in the EU-India local Human Rights Dialogue, and EU development cooperation, including through specific projects on child labour. The EU-India dialogue on employment and social policy covers also broader related subjects such as working conditions, social protection.