

16 June 2014

Parliamentary Questions by members Voordewind (ChristianUnion), Gesthuizen (Socialist Party) and Van Laar (Labour Party) to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development on a new study on large-scale child labour and other violations of labour rights in the Turkish hazelnut production

1. Are you aware of the recent research by the Fair Labor Association, commissioned by Nestlé, on child labour and working conditions in the hazelnut harvest in the Ordu and Gisesun regions in Turkey from which it appears that there is large-scale child labour (41% is younger than 18 years and half of them even under 15 years), very long working hours (more than 11 hours per day) and wages below the legal minimum?¹
2. Do you acknowledge that [the results of] this extended impact assessment are broadly consistent with the situation of the Turkish hazelnut harvest in general, also because these growers are not selected by Nestlé itself? If not, why not?
3. How do you assess this serious situation, also in view of the activities supported by you on this issue, including support to a project of the ILO in Turkey in the Ordu region that has been started in November 2012 and led to an action plan discussed with local authorities and civil society organizations?²
4. Did you raise the problem of child labour during the trade mission to Turkey (2 to 4 June this year)? If so, can you inform the Parliament on the results?
5. Are you willing to bring again the situation as described in the study with regard to the production chain of Nestlé to the attention of the Turkish authorities and the ILO and to ask them what measures they have taken or will take to prevent that the next hazelnut harvest (August/September) will again lead to child labour and other labour rights violations?
6. Are you willing, on the basis of the investigation of seasonal labour migration supported by the Netherlands³, to bring the broader issue of child labour and violations of labour rights in various sectors, including the cotton sector, to the attention of the Turkish authorities and the ILO again in order to improve the economic and social situation of these families in an effective and sustainable manner? If so, what action will you undertake?
7. Do you believe that the transparency of Nestle on these major problems, as well as making the production chain traceable, is praiseworthy, and that the same transparency openness and accountability can be expected from other companies that import and/or sale or process hazelnuts from Turkey? If so, what action do you undertake towards these companies?
8. Are you willing to ask other companies that sell or process hazelnuts from Turkey in their products - including Ahold, Unilever, Ferrero and Mondelez - what they are doing to combat child

¹ See: <http://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/Stop-Kinderarbeid/NIEUWS/Kinderarbeid-wijdverbreid-in-Turkse-hazelnootproductie>

² See: Answers to Parliamentary Questions (12 November 2013) on child labour in the production of cotton in Turkey (ah-tk-2013214-837).

³ Idem 2

labour and the associated low wages and poor working conditions and to be transparent about this?

9. Do you believe that supermarkets should raise this serious problem with their suppliers of (products containing) hazelnuts and must insist on targeted action and transparency? Are you also prepared to raise this issue with the CBL and FNLI?
10. Are you willing to ask the European Commission to raise the problem of continuing child labour and poor working conditions in seasonal agricultural work in their discussions and negotiations with the Turkish government?

[Translation by ICN]