

## FORM FOR TABLING A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

<b>ORAL QUESTIONS</b>	<b>WRITTEN QUESTIONS</b>
<b>To be put to:</b> <b>COUNCIL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>COMMISSION</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  Question for oral answer with debate (Rule 115) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>To be put to:</b> <b>PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>COUNCIL</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>COMMISSION</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>VICE-PRESIDENT / HIGH REPRESENTATIVE</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  Question for written answer (Rule 117) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Priority question (Rule 117(4)) <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>AUTHOR(S):</b> <b>BERMAN, Thijs</b>	
<b>SUBJECT:</b> (please specify) <b>Bricks industry Afghanistan</b>	
<b>TEXT:</b> <p>The ILO has published a report "Buried in Bricks" on the bricks sector in Afghanistan (Kabul and Nanghar) and the pressing human rights situation of the labourers in this sector. The study shows that by using a system of advances the kiln owners keep their labourers bonded to the kiln. Nearly all the households surveyed (98%) began working in brick kilns while they were in exile in Pakistan. The households consist of large families and have almost no access to credit, therefore they turn to brick kilns because it is one of the few places where they can get credit advances as well as in-kind payments such as shelter and water. Their debt keeps these households bonded to the kilns. And since all household members are forbidden to seek employment outside the kiln and are only allowed to leave the kiln on set times to set locations (the hospital for example) they cannot seek jobs elsewhere. The families are also tied to the kiln because they do not own land and are depended on the shelter offered by the kiln owner.</p> <p>Child labour is also widely spread in the kilns (56 % of the labourers are children). Child labour helps kiln owners maximise the in-kind payments by using all the household members and children perform the tasks that make adults more productive such as carrying water and rolling mud balls. These children are trapped in a cycle of being bonded to the kiln since they cannot attend school and forced to take over their parent's debt.</p> <p>Is the Commission aware of this pressing human rights situation in the kilns in Afghanistan and if so, what action has been taken so far?</p> <p>Would the Commission in principle be willing to support programmes of e.g. Unicef, ILO and NGOs to tackle both bonded and child labour in the Afghan brick kilns, for which options have been sketched by the ILO in the report Buried in Bricks?</p> <p>Would the Commission be willing to support specific programmes to get children working in brick kilns into mainstream education as part of the focus on the 'educational needs of vulnerable groups' as mentioned in the Country Strategy Paper Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2007-2013?</p> <p>As the Country Strategy Paper Afghanistan mentions possible actions under the thematic programme 'migration and asylum' with an emphasis on the link between migration and development, would the Commission be willing to support a regional programme with Pakistan as recommended by the ILO?</p>	
<b>Signature(s):</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Date:</b> 20/02/2012</span>	