


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1998/2075(INI)	Procedure completed
European criteria for European companies operating in developing countries LDCs: towards a European code of conduct		
Subject 3.45 Enterprise policy, inter-company cooperation 6.40.12 Relations with developing countries in general		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	DEVE Development and Cooperation		15/04/1998
		PSE HOWITT Richard	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	RELA External Economic Relations		04/06/1998
		PPE KITTELMANN Peter	

Key events			
03/04/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/11/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
25/11/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0508/1998	
14/01/1999	Debate in Parliament		
15/01/1999	Decision by Parliament	T4-0039/1999	Summary
15/01/1999	End of procedure in Parliament		
14/04/1999	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2075(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/4/09980

Documentation gateway					
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0508/1998 OJ C 104 14.04.1999, p. 0005	25/11/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0039/1999 OJ C 104 14.04.1999, p. 0176-0180	15/01/1999	EP	Summary

European criteria for European companies operating in developing countries LDCs: towards a European code of conduct

Richard Howitt (Essex South, PES) for the Development Committee will be presenting his report on EU standards for European enterprises which operate in developing countries. He is calling firstly on the Commission to establish a European code of conduct governing company operations worldwide which would incorporate existing minimum international standards on human rights, minorities, indigenous peoples, working conditions, the environment and anti-corruption measures. He wants this code to be backed up by an independent inspection body - "the European Monitoring Platform". The aim would be to grant workers and the local population in host countries anywhere in the world some form of protection from oppression, abuse and exploitation and aim for socially and environmentally sustainable operations. Mr Howitt wants legal action to be taken against companies which had failed in their basic duty of care. He is also calling on the Commission to study the possibility of passing legislation to enable lawsuits to be brought against multinationals in European courts. He is also recommending that the EU seek to strengthen existing ILO and OECD instruments to ensure more effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, with strong penalties for non-compliance. He also wants the Commission to draw up with the ACP countries an investment agreement to promote economic growth and poverty reduction and to develop the potential for extra-territorial action covering human rights, workers' protection, environmental protection and corruption.?

European criteria for European companies operating in developing countries LDCs: towards a European code of conduct

The resolution drafted by Richard Howitt (UK, PES) calling for EU-wide standards for European enterprises operating in developing countries was approved with a number of amendments. One of these called on Council to develop a joint position on voluntary codes of conduct, on the lines of the code of conduct for arms exporters, taking due account of the fact that "self-policing" is not always the answer. Another calls on the Commission and Member States to take coordinated action to promote the establishment of a truly independent and impartial monitoring mechanism which is internationally accepted.?