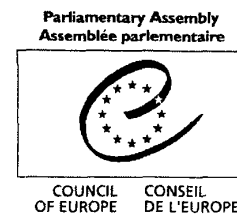


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REPORT

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ADDENDUM 1

OECD and the world economy

Forced marriages and child marriages

The following texts were submitted for inclusion in the official report by members who were present in the Chamber but were prevented by lack of time from delivering them.

OECD and the world economy

Mr LUND (*Denmark*):- The report surprised me great, because we live in a world with growing inequalities; we live in a world where 25,000 children die of hunger and malnutrition every day; we live in a world where a cow from the EU receives around 2 € every day while more than half of the world's population have less than this amount of money to live on; we live in a world where unlimited growth threatens our own possibilities for survival. The latest example is the ice-cap on the North Pole which has started melting.

Despite that, the report shows an overall picture of everything going very well. That does not make sense since the name of the report is "The OECD and the WORLD economy".

This report is surely not written by this world's many poor people suffering from hunger, war and economic exploitation by the rich countries. This report would surely have been written in another manner, if many African leaders could give their opinion about the state of the world economy.

The fact is that the report would not even make sense if the name of the report was "The OECD and the OECD economy". The overall picture is still wrong. Again, this report would not have been written in this way if it had been written by all the unemployed, all the people suffering from cuts in social welfare – or if it had been written by the people and organisations behind the successful strike here in France yesterday.

The report also states that the process of increasingly open and rule-based trade should continue, notably the Doha Round and the ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December. But in the negotiations that are going on at the moment, the rich countries are pushing very hard for an agreement that will not at all be to the benefit of the vast majority of the Third World. The rich countries, with the EU and the US in front, are pressing for market access while they are not willing to give any real offers on the very important area of agriculture. If this continues, as we see the process in the WTO now, no deal will be better than a deal. The rich countries have not taken their responsibility seriously, and the so-called development round in the WTO seems more and more to be a development round – not for the Third World, but for multinational co-operations from the EU and the US. If it continues that way, the UEL group will end up supporting the forces working for derailment of the ministerial meeting. All in all, this report shows a wrong picture of the state of the economy – both in the OECD countries as in the rest of the world.

What is really needed is to fight against global inequality, to fight for global redistribution of wealth and for better living conditions for ordinary people in our own part of the world instead of cutting social welfare all the time.

We must also fight to introduce more renewable energy resources, and fight for the environment and thereby ourselves and our own existence. In that fight, this resolution will not help. Instead, it is a step in the wrong direction. I do not like steps in the wrong direction. Therefore, I cannot give my support to this report.

Forced marriages and child marriages

Mr MARKOWSKI.(*Poland*).- At first I want to thank our colleague for this very interesting report with very important and concrete propositions of resolution. The freedom to decide whether or not to marry is the fundamental principle of the democratic marriage institution. When men and women marry, they take important responsibility for their future family. The marriage should not be permitted before they have attained full maturity and the capacity to take such responsibility.

The issue of forced marriages and child marriages lies on the delicate balance between the respect for cultural diversity and respect for human rights. However I agree that no custom of any community should violate the fundamental right to personal freedom and personal development. Forced marriages are much more dangerous than marriages of convenience. The first ones violate the fundamental democratic right of the free will of the person. Every spouse that does not consent to the marriage act should be considered as a victim. We have to remember that, in the vast majority of cases, forced marriages are consummated. That is why such forced marriages should be considered as acts of rape. Moreover, forced marriages are a modern form of slavery. Needless to say, the first victims of these crimes are women. They require special public protection and understanding.

I am highly concerned about child marriages being contracted in Albania and especially in gypsy communities all over Europe. For minors, an early marriage has far-reaching physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional consequences. The possibility for education of such spouses is limited and their chances of personal development are clearly diminished. All member states should take steps to enforce human rights in their countries and pay special attention to personal rights concerning the marriage institution. At the same time, we are aware that legislative changes will not be sufficient to eradicate forced marriages and child marriages. There is a huge need to publicise that issue. We have to raise the awareness of the situation of forced and child marriage victims. The attitudes of families living in accordance with their cultural customs and habits will not change without real public discussion about the marriage institution. Raising the awareness of every person's free will to marry is the key to solving delicate social purpose.

It is very important to distinguish arranged marriages, but there is the thin border between them. Very often, under the term of arranged marriage, we can deal with real forced marriage. We think that the problem of forced marriages is related to the family violence. We should search for all kinds of measures that will diminish violent behaviour inside families. We have to publicise this problem, give family violence victims the opportunity to share their thoughts with specialists and authorities that will be able to protect them from further acts of injustice. There is a need to train social workers in contact with actual and potential victims. I think that there is also a big task and possibility for non-governmental organisations to take part in eliminating family violence from European communities. I think that eradicating violence from families will help prevent forced marriages and child marriages.

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