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Plenary sitting

26.6.2013

B7-0327/2013

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Question for Oral Answer B7-0210/2013

pursuant to Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure

on the increase in Norwegian duties on agricultural products
(2013/2547(RSP))

Vital Moreira, Christofer Fjellner

on behalf of the Committee on International Trade

**European Parliament resolution on the increase in Norwegian duties on agricultural products
(2013/2547(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 19 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement),
 - having regard to the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway concerning additional trade preferences in agricultural products reached on the basis of Article 19 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area (the Bilateral Agreement)¹,
 - having regard to its legislative resolution of 13 September 2011 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway concerning additional trade preferences in agricultural products reached on the basis of Article 19 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area²,
 - having regard to the letter of 9 March 2011 from the Minister of Trade and Industry of Norway to the Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, concerning the Single Market Act,
 - having regard to the conclusions of the 38th meeting of the EEA Council of 26 November 2012,
 - having regard to the question to the Commission on the ‘Significant increase in Norwegian duties on agricultural products’ (O-000048/2013 – B7-0210/2013),
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas according to Article 19 of the EEA Agreement, ‘The Contracting Parties undertake to continue their efforts with a view to achieving progressive liberalisation of agricultural trade’;
- B. whereas the EEA Agreement provides the basis for Norway to enjoy equal access to the internal market and whereas the parties to the Agreement have found it to be mutually beneficial;
- C. whereas, in general, economic and political relations between the EU and Norway are in an excellent state; whereas emerging differences between the partners should be addressed in the form of a dialogue;

¹ OJ L 327, 9.12.2011, p. 1.

² OJ C 51 E, 22.2.2013, p. 168.

- D. whereas the Bilateral Agreement in force since January 2012 has renewed the preferential, reciprocal and mutually beneficial legal framework for trade preferences in agricultural products, including meat and dairy products;
- E. whereas through that agreement the EU and the Kingdom of Norway have extended mutual liberalisation of trade in agricultural products by granting duty-free access, establishing tariff quotas and reducing import duties for a wide range of agricultural products;
- F. whereas since 1 January 2013 European exporters of certain cheeses and of lamb and beef meat have faced *ad valorem* duties of 277 %, 429 % and 344 %, respectively, in the Norwegian market; whereas this measure was preceded by the imposition of a new 72 % import duty on hydrangea (*hortensia*) flowers;
- G. whereas these measures, although permitted under the Norwegian World Trade Organisation schedule, go against the letter and the spirit of the Bilateral Agreement, in particular Article 10 thereof, which states that ‘The Parties will take steps to ensure that the benefits which they grant each other will not be jeopardised by other restrictive import measures’;
- H. whereas economic growth, employment and inflation indicators show no sign of any negative impact of the global economic or financial crisis on the Norwegian economy;
1. Deplores the recent measures imposed by the Norwegian Government, which it regards as protectionist and prohibitive to trade, and as clearly breaching the letter and the spirit of the Bilateral Agreement;
 2. Stresses that these measures were proposed by the Norwegian Government without any prior consultation with its EU counterparts, as would have been appropriate in the context of the strong bilateral relations existing between the EU and Norway;
 3. Questions the economic logic behind these measures, which could have trade-reducing effects, harming all the parties involved and especially Norwegian consumers, and in the long run Norwegian farmers as well; calls on the Commission to assess the potential negative effects of the increased tariffs on EU exporters and farmers;
 4. Urges the Norwegian Government and Parliament to withdraw the measures;
 5. Calls on the Norwegian Government and on the Commission to take note of Iceland’s recent ambitious steps to liberalise its agricultural trade with the Union; urges the Norwegian Government to follow its example;
 6. Calls on the Norwegian Government to accept a review of Protocol 3 to the EEA Agreement, concerning trade in processed agricultural products, in order to assess whether the duties on the aforementioned products are deemed to be fair and justified;
 7. Calls on the Commission to enter into negotiations immediately with the Norwegian authorities in order to work for a mutually satisfactory solution in relation to imports/exports of agricultural products;

8. Asks the Commission to specify the measures it intends to take in the eventuality that Norway refuses to reverse its decision, in particular with a view to protecting jobs and output in the Union's agricultural sector, should the need arise;
9. Calls on the Commission to take into consideration the possibility of proposing further action in the event of a lack of cooperation, with the aim of having the measures withdrawn;
10. Recalls the express commitment made by Norway to the internal market, in particular in the context of recent initiatives such as the Single Market Act I and II; points out that the Norwegian Government has itself recognised that an efficient single market is a foundation for future growth and job creation and that the current crisis should not be used as an excuse for turning to protectionist and trade-distorting measures;
11. Expresses its hope that Norway will remain an integral part of the internal market and not resort to further disintegrative unilateral measures;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Norwegian Government and Parliament and the institutions of the European Economic Area.