

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



2004

Session document

26 June 2003

B5-0330/2003

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

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on behalf of the ELDR Group

on preparations for the 5th World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference
(Cancun, Mexico, 10-14 September 2003)

European Parliament resolution on preparations for the 5th World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference (Cancun, Mexico, 10-14 September 2003)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions of 18 November 1999 on the communication of the Commission to the Council and the Parliament on the EU approach to the WTO Millennium Round, 15 December 1999 on the 3rd WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle and 13 March 2001 on the built-in agenda negotiations,
 - having regard to the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference Declaration adopted on 14 November 2001 in Doha,
 - having regard to its resolution on the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference (B5-0691/2001),
- A. whereas although political concerns and anxieties expressed about the operation of the WTO and the effects of international trade are often legitimate, they should not obscure the strong case for the further strengthening of a rule-based multilateral trade system,
- B. whereas it remains essential that the WTO should be reformed as part of a new trade round so as to improve the legitimacy, transparency and efficiency of its operations,
1. Maintains and underlines its demands made ahead of the 3rd WTO Ministerial Conference and stresses its support for a broad agenda in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations;

The needs of developing countries

2. Recalls that the WTO negotiations are to be conducted with a view to promoting the economic growth of all trading partners and the development of the developing and least developed countries, and that the TO negotiations should be measured against that overriding goal;
3. Believes that, in order to bring the ‘Doha Development Agenda’ to a successful conclusion and to strengthen the multilateral trading system, it is essential that all the members participate in the decision-making process;
4. Remains concerned that many developing countries have not shared fully in the benefits derived from the previous round, and are often unable to muster the necessary resources to participate fully in the WTO negotiations and to defend their own rights within the WTO;

Agriculture

5. Expects, given its importance for the developing countries and the need for significant results, the establishment of modalities which take account of the interests of all the

developing countries;

6. Considers it essential that the Council of Ministers rapidly overcome its internal divisions concerning the European Commission's 'mid term review' proposals for CAP reform; takes the view that without urgent agreement on CAP reform, the EU will remain unnecessarily on the defensive within the WTO;
7. Believes in the need substantially to reduce, with a view to their elimination, export subsidies and domestic supports, with the exception of domestic support linked to non-trade concerns;
8. Considers it of the utmost importance to agree upon legal recognition of non-trade concerns, such as animal welfare and environmental conditions, in the international WTO trade agreements;

Market access, tariff reduction and trade facilitation

9. Stresses the need for agreements on modalities for industrial goods with regard to market access; tariff peaks, high tariffs and tariff escalation should be reduced or eliminated; tariff cuts should affect all sectors without sheltering specific sectors;
10. Asks for a clear distinction between legitimate regulatory measures and the use of measures to establish unjustified barriers to trade;

GATS

11. Underlines that progress in services negotiations is essential, and supports the additional services liberalisation commitments from the Commission designed to enhance market access for EU service providers by reducing or dismantling barriers to trade in services;
12. Believes that the GATS negotiations should aim for steadily increasing levels of market access, while respecting the objectives of national policies and recognising the differing levels of development of WTO members;
13. Welcomes the EU's decision not to make any commitments in the education and health sectors or in the audio-visual sector, but stresses that this should not be used as a precedent to exclude additional sectors from GATS;

Trade and environment

14. Believes that WTO rules and decisions must support, and not interfere with, the objectives and effectiveness of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); considers the scope of the negotiations under paragraph 31(i) of the Doha Ministerial Declaration too narrow and tightly prescribed to allow for a progressive position to be taken by WTO members; would therefore support a political process within which to discuss the WTO-MEAs relationship outside the WTO, preferably under the auspices of the UN;
15. Takes the view that this should end with, inter alia, the inclusion of provisions aimed at safeguarding environmental sustainability: full incorporation of the precautionary

principle into WTO rules; the insulation of MEAs from unwarranted challenges within the WTO; a closer relationship between the WTO and international environmental bodies, notably UNEP; the strengthening of the MEAs and their own dispute settlement mechanisms; and further reflection on the way WTO rules apply to Process and Production Methods (PPMs), as well as the way in which the burden of proof on environment and public safety matters falls upon importing countries;

Protection of intellectual property (TRIPS)

16. Underlines the importance of efficient protection of intellectual property for the knowledge-based society; is well aware, however, of the difficulties faced by many developing countries in implementing the undertakings entered into under the agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPs);
17. Calls on WTO members to break the deadlock on TRIPS with regard to access to medicines; suggests that the solution could be a flexible system consisting in a list of serious infectious epidemics that would be covered, with guidance on all other cases of serious public health problems being given by the World Health Organisation;
18. Stresses that there is an urgent need to promote access to medicines for all, and recognises that there is a need to encourage pharmaceutical producers to make available pharmaceutical products at reduced prices and in increases volumes in order to ensure that these products remain available on all markets;
19. Stresses that all necessary measures should be taken to prevent the export of cheap medicines back to Europe;

Singapore issues

20. Remains convinced of the potential development benefits of multilateral agreements in new areas such as investment and competition policy;
21. Considers, however, that these benefits will only occur if the legitimate concerns of developing countries about the complexity and scope of negotiations in these areas are urgently addressed. This should include reassurances that developing countries will be able to impose reasonable restrictions and qualifications where their national economic interest is clearly at stake. Substantial technical assistance must also be guaranteed to allow developing countries' negotiators to participate fully and effectively in these negotiations;

Legitimacy and transparency

22. Calls on the Ministerial Conference to strengthen the democratic accountability and openness of the WTO, both at the level of WTO members and through the creation of a WTO Parliamentary Assembly;
23. Reiterates its call for a consultative WTO Parliamentary Assembly composed of representatives of the WTO members' parliaments with responsibility for trade; calls on

the parliamentarians who are going to meet at the 5th Ministerial Conference to continue the work which started in Seattle and has continued ever since thanks to the joint efforts of WTO members' parliaments;

24. Calls on WTO members and the WTO to provide sufficient support to enable their parliamentarians to take part in the development of the parliamentary dimension of the WTO; stresses the need for a provisional infrastructure for the Parliamentary Assembly until the WTO assumes its responsibilities in this respect; offers the necessary facilities for this purpose;
25. Calls on the Commission to keep it fully informed, before and during the Ministerial Conference in Cancun and throughout the negotiations, and to discuss with it regularly, on the basis of the resolutions adopted by Parliament, the essential elements of the EU's negotiating strategy; insists on maintaining the right secured at the close of the Uruguay Round to subject the conclusion of the results of the New Round to a vote of assent;
26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Director-General of the WTO.