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Plenary sitting

8.2.2012

B7-0048/2012

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the agreement between the EU and Morocco concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products and fishery products (2012/2522(RSP))

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on behalf of the S&D Group

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European Parliament resolution on the agreement between the EU and Morocco concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products and fishery products (2012/2522(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Barcelona Declaration of 28 November 1995 which established a partnership between the European Union and Southern Mediterranean countries,
- having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Union and the Member States of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part,
- having regard to the Council decision of 14 October 2005 to authorise negotiations with Morocco on the reciprocal liberalisation of agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products,
- having regard to the Council decision of 14 December 2011 to authorise negotiations with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, with a view to establishing "deep and comprehensive" free trade areas, as part of the existing Euro-Mediterranean association agreements with those countries,
- having regard to the Joint Communication of the European Commission to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 8 March 2011 on 'A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean', COM(2011) 200 final,
- having regard to the Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 25 May 2011 on 'A new response to a changing Neighbourhood' COM(2011) 303 final,
- having regard to the consent procedure pursuant to Article 207 and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C7-0201/2011),
- having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on corporate social responsibility in international trade agreements (2009/2201(INI)),
- having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas the EU maintains a significant surplus in trade in goods with Morocco which reached €5.9 billion in 2010;
- B. whereas the EU has a substantial agricultural and fisheries trade surplus with Southern Mediterranean countries of over €4 billion but a bilateral agricultural and fisheries trade deficit with Morocco which was €633 million in 2010;
- C. whereas agriculture represented 16.4% of Moroccan GDP in 2009 and employs over 40% of the Moroccan workforce; whereas agriculture represented 2.1% of EU GDP in 2006 and employs 5.2% of the European workforce but has nevertheless an extraordinary importance in certain EU regions;
- D. whereas the Agreement immediately liberalises 55% of tariffs on the EU's agricultural and fisheries products (rising from 33%) and 70% of tariffs on Morocco's agricultural and fisheries products within 10 years (rising from 1%);
- E. whereas the monitoring of sensitive products and strict application of quotas is a necessary requirement for a balanced functioning of the agreement;
- F. whereas Morocco is one of the four Southern Mediterranean countries for which the Council has authorised negotiating directives for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA); whereas trade in agricultural products will form part of these negotiations;
- G. whereas over 85% of Morocco's farmers hold less than five hectares of land and whereas Morocco has undertaken major reforms to help modernise this sector;
 - 1. Recalls the EU's commitments following the Arab Spring, to assist the transition of Southern Mediterranean countries in the process of democratisation, by making use of trade and economic instruments to provide greater freedom and economic opportunities. In this context welcomes the agreement as a positive step in supporting political stabilisation and mutual sustainable economic development;
 - 2. Believes that trade liberalisation between the EU and Morocco can provide mutual benefits, driving economic growth, prosperity, creating employment and alleviating poverty;
 - 3. Highlights the concerns expressed by certain EU sectors at increased duty-free quotas for sensitive fruits and vegetable imports; Notes the constant complaints about the implementation of the entry price system and asks for guarantees so that the future tariff quotas provided for in the agreement will continue to be properly regulated by the EU and that there will be no misinterpretation of the implementation of the Entry Price

mechanism. In addition calls on the Commission to monitor and inform the Parliament of the impact of this agreement on European producers, especially on the rents of farmers and to compensate any negative impact on such EU producers;

4. Welcomes the additional non-tariff measures included in the agreement such as extra protection for European GIs, enhanced safeguard mechanisms and SPS measures; furthermore, recalls that the EU and Morocco have agreed a dispute settlement mechanism which allows either Party to gain redress if the other Party does not respect the terms of the Agreement;
5. Underlines that access to the EU's internal market should be conditional on meeting certain hygiene and safety standards and welcomes the positive Food and Veterinary Office report in 2011; Emphasises the importance of thorough and regular hygiene inspections. Welcomes the emphasis in the Agreement on SPS measures and calls for technical assistance to be central to the negotiations for a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement (DCFTA);
6. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the future agreement fully respects international law and benefits all the local population groups affected;
7. Recognises that Morocco has ratified most of the relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and recently adopted legislation to outlaw child labour. Nevertheless, emphasises that there remains room for improvement regarding freedom of association and child labour; Expects that greater work is carried out implementing ILO conventions in cooperation with the EU through this agreement and that Morocco regularly presents an update of its achievements in implementation;
8. Welcomes reform in the Moroccan agriculture sector, namely the 'Plan Vert' designed specifically to support small scale farmers giving them access to modern technology and investment. Calls for continued EU support in production methods to share best practice and assist Morocco's efforts on water conservation;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EP Delegation for Relations with the Maghreb Countries, the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean and the Parliament and Government of Morocco.