



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

8.2.2012

B7-0051/2012

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))

Robert Sturdy
on behalf of the ECR Group

B7-0051/2012

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 28th 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 14th 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 Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 25th May 2011 on ‘*A new response to a changing Neighbourhood*’ COM(2011) 303 final,
 - having regard to the conclusions of EU Foreign Affairs Council of 14th December 2011 to authorise the opening of trade negotiations with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia,
 - having regard to the proposed Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products, the replacement of Protocols 1, 2 and 3 and their Annexes and amendments to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part,
 - 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 Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the evolving political landscape in the Southern Mediterranean following the events of the Arab Spring has necessitated a strong, effective and rapid response from the EU;
- B. whereas the strengthening of trade relations and a balanced and progressive commercial liberalization with these countries is an important component of this response;

- C. whereas trade and investment are engines for growth and help to reduce poverty, bringing people together, securing ties between nations and contributing to political stability;
- D. whereas Article 16 of the EU Morocco Association Agreement, in force since 1 March 2000, provides that the European Community and Morocco will gradually implement greater liberalization of their reciprocal trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products;
- E. whereas the EU maintains a significant surplus in trade in goods with Morocco which reached €5.9 billion in 2010;
- F. 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; whereas trade in agricultural and fisheries products represents around 18% of Moroccan exports;
- G. whereas agriculture represented 16.4% of Moroccan GDP in 2009 and employs around 38% of the Moroccan workforce; whereas agriculture represented 2.1% of EU GDP in 2006 and employs around 5% of the European workforce;
- H. whereas the proposed 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%);
- I. whereas all agricultural goods from all third countries imported into the EU must adhere to the Union's regulations governing sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS);
- J. 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;

General Considerations

1. Believes that trade liberalisation and progressive integration into the EU's internal market are powerful instruments for the development of Southern Mediterranean countries and help alleviate the widespread poverty and unemployment that drives economic, migratory and security problems in the region; considers that, for this potential to be realised, the EU must be prepared to make trade concessions in sensitive sectors such as agriculture;
2. Underlines that, in the wake of the Arab Spring, the EU has a responsibility to make full use of its trade and economic capabilities to aid the transition of those Southern Mediterranean countries which, like Morocco, are taking significant steps towards democratisation;

The Agreement

3. Stresses that the Agreement will provide significant opportunities for the EU's agricultural industry, particularly in processed foods; points out that EU exporters will eventually benefit from the removal of Moroccan import tariffs for 70% of agricultural and fisheries product lines which will save an estimated €100 million in customs duties;
4. Considers it essential that trade and investment initiatives should aim to benefit all sections of society and be particularly targeted at SMEs and small farmers; in this context, notes that over 80% of Morocco's farmers hold less than five hectares of land and therefore welcomes the support of the Confédération marocaine de l'agriculture et du développement rural (COMADER) for the Agreement;
5. Underlines that access to the EU's internal market is conditional on meeting certain hygiene and safety standards and welcomes the positive Food and Veterinary Office's report of 2011; welcomes the emphasis in the Agreement on SPS measures and calls for technical assistance to be central to the negotiations for any future deep and comprehensive free trade agreement (DCFTA) with Morocco;
6. 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 strong dispute settlement mechanism which allows the EU to gain redress if Morocco does not respect the terms of the Agreement;
7. Notes the concerns of some European industry groups at increased duty-free quotas for sensitive fruits and vegetable imports; however, underlines that the increase in duty free quotas represents a tiny percentage of European production (e.g. roughly 0.8% for tomatoes), and that these imports are further restricted by seasonal allocations and the entry price system;
8. Calls on the European Commission to regularly inform the European Parliament on the outcome of monitoring the exchanges of agricultural products, in particular the most sensitive products in order to ensure control of the compliance of this agreement and to avoid disturbances of markets and ensure market stability and continuity of supply in the FV sector;
9. Emphasises that, like many developing countries, Morocco faces significant challenges in guaranteeing labour rights; notes that, despite ratifying most of the relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and adopting legislation banning child labour, concerns remain over freedom of association and child labour; considers that the DCFTAs should include assistance with the implementation of ILO conventions, ratifying unsigned core conventions (e.g. Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (N° 87)) and initiatives on corporate social responsibility;
10. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the future Agreement fully respects international law and benefits all the local populations affected;

11. 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.