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B5-0102/2003 }
B5-0107/2003 }
B5-0109/2003 }
B5-0128/2003 }

RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 37(4) of the Rules of Procedure by

- Arlindo Cunha and Konrad K. Schwaiger, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Eryl Margaret McNally and Margrietus J. van den Berg, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Nicholas Clegg, on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Danielle Auroi and Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- Verts/ALE (B5-0102/2003),
- PPE-DE (B5-0107/2003),
- ELDR (B5-0109/2003),
- PSE (B5-0128/2003),

on the WTO agricultural trade negotiations

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PE 328.068}
PE 328.073}
PE 328.075}
PE 328.095} RC1

European Parliament resolution on the WTO agricultural trade negotiations

The European Parliament,

- A. whereas the conclusions of the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference held in Doha laid down a precise timetable for multilateral agricultural negotiations which should culminate in the presentation of a list of commitments before the Fifth Conference, to be held in Cancún in September 2003,
 - B. whereas agriculture is one of the most sensitive sectors in world trade due to its impact on food security, food safety and the sustainable use and protection of natural resources and landscapes; due to its strategic importance to all States as well as the distortion of world markets caused by export subsidies; and due to the importance of the right of peoples to feed themselves and to have access to land, water, seeds and other basic natural resources,
 - C. whereas agriculture and rural development have an important role in curbing rural depopulation and the flight from the land in disadvantaged rural areas,
 - D. whereas the European Union must continue to pursue a public agricultural and rural policy which is supranational by nature and which enables the multifunctional agricultural model to survive and, at the same time, to fulfil increased social demands for sustainable agricultural and rural development, economic, social and territorial cohesion, quality and safety of foodstuffs and, finally, protection of the environment, biodiversity, health and animal welfare,
 - E. whereas most of the developing countries have their highest comparative advantage in agricultural production and whereas the WTO rules should not hinder their benefiting from it,
- 1. Takes note of the Commission's proposal for modalities in the WTO agricultural negotiations, which was adopted by the General Affairs Council on 27 January 2003;
 - 2. Recalls that all WTO members committed themselves at the WTO summit in Doha in November 2001 to agricultural negotiations aimed at substantial improvements in market access; reductions in all forms of export subsidies, with a view to their phasing out; substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support; special and differential treatment for developing countries, to take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development; and taking account of non-trade concerns;
 - 3. Notes that agriculture continues to be the principal source of income and employment in most developing countries, and that reform of agricultural trade rules has a major contribution to make to the fight against poverty, the improvement of food security worldwide, and the wider distribution of the benefits of trade; insists that all developed countries must play their part in achieving such reform;

4. Insists that, to make the Doha Round a genuine Development Round, the first priority of the agricultural negotiations must be to create trade rules which promote agricultural development, employment and the fight against poverty in developing and least developed countries, without endangering the fundamental objectives of the European Union's multifunctional agricultural policy;
5. Therefore calls on the Commission to insist on the following indispensable objectives in negotiation:
 - a more substantial and rapid reduction in all agricultural tariffs and quantitative restrictions on agricultural imports from developing and least developed countries other than the most sensitive sectors; the substantial reduction, with a view to the eventual reciprocal elimination by all WTO members, of all forms of export subsidy and schemes having an equivalent effect, including aspects of food aid, export credit, credit guarantees, and loan and insurance schemes;
 - enhanced recognition of non-trade aspects of agricultural policy, through strengthening non-trade-distorting agricultural support measures through the 'green box', to ensure that well-targeted and transparent support measures to promote environmental, rural development, employment and animal welfare goals are exempted from reduction commitments; and a clarification of the green, blue and amber box classifications;
 - insistence on each country's right to set its own environmental, food safety and consumer protection standards, with recognition that differentiation of traded goods on the basis of production methods must be possible within the framework of WTO rules, and that WTO rules should therefore not restrict compulsory or voluntary labelling schemes;
6. Recalls that further access to EU feed and food markets does not, on its own, automatically generate improved income for developing countries and their neediest populations; points to the urgent need for rules favouring a better distribution of gains from trade, particularly in favour of the most disadvantaged regions and populations in developing countries; urges the Commission to negotiate rules which ban dumping practices and establish a concept of food security for developing countries;
7. Considers that the negotiations must result in special and differential provisions allowing all WTO members to expand market access further and faster in respect of agricultural produce from developing and least developed countries than in respect of produce from developed countries; and allowing developing and least developed countries the flexibility they need, in respect of market access and domestic support commitments, in the interests of their subsistence farming sector, and their development and food security needs; welcomes the proposal for the introduction of a so-called food security box; and considers that the EU and all developed countries should make further efforts to improve the income of the poorest developing countries through assistance with diversifying production and increasing the export of locally processed high-value products to their markets;
8. Notes that several WTO members have taken undue advantage of the 'de minimis' clause, causing distortions in agricultural trade, and encourages the Commission to negotiate a revision, to allow domestic support for food security and agricultural diversification;

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9. Recalls the interests of European producers and consumers in high food quality, rural development, environmental protection and animal welfare, and insists that agricultural trade rules must be consistent with these objectives, making it possible to strengthen equitable and market-oriented multifunctional agriculture throughout the enlarged Union, agriculture which addresses environmental protection, food safety, rural development and employment and is capable of ensuring the production of safe, high-quality products, and the promotion of sustainable rural development;
10. Regrets that proposals for the promotion of animal welfare in international trade do not go far enough;
11. Insists on the need to achieve progress in the parallel discussions on Indications of Geographical Origin, in order to facilitate the preservation of some traditional methods of production, and also to enable farmers in Europe and other highly developed regions to shift towards diversified, high-value-added production;
12. Points out that the incomes of the majority of European farmers are rapidly falling, while a small number of processing industries and retailers is absorbing a growing share of public funds; insists, therefore, that modulation of payments to farmers, following social criteria and the principle of cross-compliance, needs to be part of the CAP reform package; and considers that a new negotiating mandate for the Commission following the mid-term review will be essential;
13. Calls for the agricultural products and the tariff measures that the European Union must negotiate with its trading partners to be subject to social and environmental criteria which are to be established in compliance with binding international conventions relating to social standards, the management of natural resources and food security (ILO, CBD, UNDP and FAO);
14. Calls for a review of trade-distorting bilateral trade agreements which encourage strategic Community dependence on imports from developed countries;
15. Emphasises the role of the two strongest trading blocks - the EU and the USA - in providing leadership through far-reaching proposals in the process of world trade liberalisation; also insists that they, together with other major trading nations, play their part in ensuring the success of the agricultural trade talks; calls on those which have not yet tabled proposals to the WTO to do so rapidly; draws attention to the US Farm Bill which is a reversal from the objectives agreed in Doha;
16. Signals its intention to follow closely the multilateral agriculture negotiations and insists on close cooperation with the Commission and regular meetings to ensure that Parliament is fully informed; reserves the right to formulate recommendations on this point;
17. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council and the parliaments of the Member States.