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Committee on International Trade

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DRAFT REPORT

containing a motion for a non-legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol Amending the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization
(06040/2015 – C8-0077/2015 – 2015/0029(NLE) – 2015/2067(INI))

Committee on International Trade

Rapporteur: Pablo Zalba Bidegain

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT NON-LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Protocol Amending the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization

(06040/2015 – C8-0077/2015 – 2015/0029(NLE) – 2015/2067(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the draft Council decision (06040/2015),
- having regard to the request for consent submitted by the Council in accordance with Article 207(4) and Article 218(6), second subparagraph, point (a), of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (C8-0077/2015),
- having regard to its resolution of 21 November 2013 on the state of play of the Doha Development Agenda and preparations for the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference¹,
- having regard to the ACP-EU JPA resolution on regional integration and modernisation of customs for sustainable development in ACP countries, in cooperation with the EU²,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘A Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015’³,
- having regard to the results of the Ninth Ministerial Conference in Indonesia in December 2013 and the agreement reached there on trade facilitation⁴,
- having regard to the statement by the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council of 27 November 2014⁵,
- having regard to the OECD report of February 2014 entitled ‘The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement – Potential Impact on Trade Costs’,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of ...⁶ on the draft Council decision,
- having regard to Rule 99(1), second subparagraph of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on International Trade and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A8-0000/2015),

A. whereas much work can and should be done unilaterally to facilitate trade, but there is

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2013)0511.

² http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/91_01/pdf/1024168en.pdf

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 5 February 2015 (COM(2015)0044).

⁴ The Bali Ministerial Declaration (WT/MIN(13)/DEC); Bali Ministerial Decision on Trade Facilitation Agreement (WT/MIN(13)/36 or WT/L/911 of 11 December 2013).

https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc9_e/balipackage_e.htm

⁵ Protocol amending the Marrakesh Agreement establishing The World Trade Organization WT/L/940 of 28 November 2014.

⁶ Texts adopted of that date, P8_TA(2015)0000.

no doubt that in many areas international cooperation can increase gains and reduce costs;

- B. whereas two thirds of the WTO membership need to ratify the agreement before it can enter into force; in that regard, it calls for WTO members to do their utmost to enable the agreement to enter into force as soon as possible and before the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC10) in Nairobi in December;
 - C. whereas some of the large emerging economies such as China, Brazil and India will not ask for technical assistance; this is to be welcomed as it ensures that the assistance available goes to those most in need;
 - D. whereas the EU is committed to promoting free, fair and open trade which is balanced and of mutual benefit for all; whereas the WTO is the natural framework for the reaffirmation of these principles;
 - E. whereas the EU is one of the largest aid donors in the world;
1. Welcomes the results of the ninth WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2013, where negotiations were concluded by the 160 WTO members on the Trade Facilitation Agreement; considers the Trade Facilitation Agreement an important milestone, as it is the first multilateral agreement since the establishment of the WTO in 1995 and will create a blueprint for customs modernisation amongst the 161 WTO members;
 2. Emphasises that the EU remains in favour of the Bali Package decisions being faithfully implemented by all WTO Members which would enable attention to be turned towards the successful conclusion of the negotiations under the Doha Development Agenda (DDA);
 3. Acknowledges the benefits that the implementation of this agreement will bring, in particular for SMEs; emphasises that the agreement will reduce uncertainty regarding market entry conditions and the costs of trade by between 12.5 % and 17.5 % (according to estimates such as those by the OECD) thus allowing businesses to access new markets and improve their competitiveness by reducing red tape and associated costs;
 4. Urges all members of the WTO to try to find a solution without delay for implementing the Bali Package so that the DDA can be concluded for the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference;
 5. Stresses the importance of this agreement from a development perspective, taking into account that special and differential treatment applies whereby developing and least developed countries can decide when the different provisions will be implemented and for which ones technical assistance will be required;
 6. Emphasises that the degree of implementation of the agreement will determine the benefits that will be derived therefrom;
 7. Emphasises that a number of requirements under the agreement, notably on transparency and the automated entry and payment of duties, can be a powerful means of addressing border corruption;

8. Supports fully the EU initiative of providing EUR 400 million in funding for the provision of technical assistance to developing and least developed countries which will be spent on projects such as improving the customs systems of developing and least developed countries;
9. Highlights, however, that this funding should be very well coordinated with the funding coming from other international donors such as UNCTAD, the WTO and the World Bank; stresses that duplication should be avoided as should excessive bureaucracy for requesting countries, which could act as a deterrent for those seeking assistance;
10. Calls also for close cooperation with specialist organisations such as the World Customs Organization which can provide valuable expertise on a case-by-case basis;
11. Underlines the key role that can be played by EU delegations around the world which can work with developing and least developed countries 'on the ground' and asks for the largest possible involvement of these delegations in the disbursement of technical assistance;
12. Calls on the Commission to do its utmost to support developing and least developed countries in the implementation of their commitments;
13. Recommends that international organisations and the partners of developing and least developed countries collaborate closely in the implementation of category C provisions in order to implement them within the shortest possible time;
14. Instructs its President to forward this decision to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the World Trade Organization.