Bilateral trade relations with China

2007/2588(RSP) - 10/07/2007

The House held a debate on Oral Question **O-0032/2007** pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure by Helmuth Markov, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade to the Commission.

Subject: Recent developments in bilateral trade relations with China

In 2006 the People's Republic of China displaced the United States to become the largest source of EU imports, while the EU's trade deficit with China grew to €128 billion. In January 2007 the negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) were launched and, the following month, the Commission released a study which suggested that there were major opportunities for EU exporters in green goods, business services and high-value products. However, the study also concluded that EU exporters faced serious barriers when trying to access the Chinese market, as well as poor protection of intellectual property rights.

In this context, could the Commission:

- Set out the latest developments in the negotiations towards a new PCA, and the expected timetable?
- Ensure, in accordance with Article 19 of the Framework Agreement between the European Parliament and the Commission, that ‘early and clear information' is provided to Parliament during the conduct of the negotiations and, in particular, that the adopted negotiating directive is transmitted?
- Explain how it intends to address the lack of a high level of protection of human rights and of adequate environmental, social and safety standards in China within the PCA negotiations and the WTO framework, as well as its proposed approach towards Chinese distortions of the world market for trade in natural resources?
- Explain what steps it is taking to improve market access for EU exporters, how it proposes to combat unfounded allegations of safety problems with European products, some of which appear to have been instigated by official bodies, and, in the light of the US decision to initiate WTO Dispute Settlement procedures with regard to the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in China, what measures it envisages taking to ensure that European industry does not continue to suffer widespread damage as a result of counterfeiting and piracy?
- Provide an assessment of China's progress towards the fulfilment of the conditions set by the EU in relation to its Market Economy Status request?

The debate was not followed by the adoption of a resolution.