Resolution on the suspension of the WTO Doha Round and the future of the Doha Development Agenda

2008/2631(RSP) - 09/10/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 8 October, the European Parliament adopted by 567 votes to 37 with 47 abstentions a resolution on the suspension of the WTO Doha Round and the future of the Doha Development Agenda. The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, and UEN groups.

Parliament notes that negotiations broke down in Geneva in July 2008. It expresses its serious disappointment and concern at the stalemate that occurred at the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in July 2008. Members reiterate their full commitment to the multilateral approach to trade policy and to a WTO able to guarantee a comprehensive, ambitious and balanced outcome for international trade on a basis of full respect for the Millennium Development Goals.

Parliament is convinced that in the current context, characterised by economic and financial crisis, a successful conclusion of the Doha Round could be a stabilising factor. It believes that whatever happens in terms of progress on the DDA, the WTO, with the other international organisations, needs, consistently and urgently, to tackle new global challenges in which trade plays a part, such as food security, energy, aid for trade and climate change. It is fully aware of the difficulties of a Single Undertaking, and acknowledges the progress made during the negotiations so far, which should provide an important and consolidated basis at the next meeting for pursuing the Doha Round and achieving a successful outcome.

Members call on the EU and the USA, as well as the G20 as new major economic players, to assume their responsibilities in the current negotiations, to respect fully the spirit of the Development Round, and to make every effort to reach a deal as rapidly as possible; emphasises once more the importance of a differentiation between developing and emerging countries. They call on India and the USA to find a political solution on the issue of the conditions for the application of Special Safeguard Mechanisms (SSM) to ensure a fair balance between trade and food security concerns, in order to enable a continuation of DDA negotiations in Geneva on other outstanding issues. Developed and advanced developing countries are asked to follow the EU Everything But Arms initiative, offering 100 % duty-free, quota-free market access for LDCs. They are also asked to emphasise the importance of Aid for Trade.

Parliament believes that the needs of developing and, especially, the LDCs should be given priority in the DDA negotiations, with development being at the forefront of all considerations. The difficulties relating to the DDA highlight the need, once the Doha Round is over, to address urgently the question of reform of the WTO in order to make it more effective and transparent and improve its democratic legitimacy, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and integration into the wider architecture of global governance. Parliamentarians should exercise even more vigorous and effective scrutiny in the area of international trade.

Members reiterate the need for targeted technical assistance and capacity-building to help developing countries to engage effectively in the DDA.

Lastly, they call on the Commission and Council to establish an agreement in the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty to ensure the full participation of Parliament in the EU's international trade negotiations.