Resolution on the state of play of the Doha development agenda and preparations for the ninth WTO ministerial conference

2013/2740(RSP) - 21/11/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 486 votes to 93 with 25 abstentions a resolution tabled by the Committee on International Trade on the state of play of the Doha Development Agenda and preparations for the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference, which will take place in Indonesia from 3 to 6 December 2013.

Recalling that there have been various attempts to give impetus to the Doha Development Agenda which stalled in July 2008, Parliament reiterated its full commitment to the enduring value of multilateralism, but supported a structural reform of the WTO, which took greater account of the interests of SMEs and the need for simplified rules, in terms of both trade facilitation and international arbitration court systems.

Members stressed the following:

- the importance of taking full account in the negotiations of the special needs of low-income developing countries and LDCs;
- the need to ensure that the principle of special and differential treatment (S&DT) constituted an integral part of all layers of the negotiations, and that meaningful S&DT provisions should be made more precise, subject to periodic reviews and targeted;
- the need for appropriate flanking policies to trade liberalisation, encompassing macro- and micro-economic interventions, including budget transparency, fiscal policies and tax equity, so as to distribute better the benefits of trade reforms;
- that the multilateral system needed to be accompanied by improvements in trade capacity, since there were still countries that did not have the human, institutional and infrastructural capacity to participate effectively in international trade;
- the successful role that the Aid for Trade Initiative but regretting that the amount of the commitments was reduced in 2011 because of the financial crisis.

Members called for:

- the EU to support measures addressing **genuine food security** concerns of developing countries, and ensure coherence between the various EU policies in the field of external action, namely development policy and the common commercial policy;
- developed countries and emerging economies to follow the example of the EU Everything but Arms initiative, offering the least developed countries (LDCs) **100 % duty free, quota-free market access**, and to ensure that the LDC services waiver is implemented;

- the EU to continue pushing for the initiation of an Environmental Technology Agreement aimed at reducing tariffs on environmental technology products and to seek clarification on the legal relationship between WTO rules and multilateral environmental agreements.

Services: Members welcomed the opening of negotiations on a plurilateral Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), and stresses the EU's commitment to promoting work in the area of liberalisation in the services sector. They underlined the importance of ensuring that any agreement is ambitious, while preserving WTO members' national policy objectives and their right to regulate services of general interest.

Procurement: Parliament welcomed the revision of the WTO plurilateral Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) as agreed in March 2012, and called on WTO Members, in particular developing countries and current observers of the GPA, to consider joining the agreement, in order to take advantage of the new provisions for developing countries that increase flexibility and to reap its benefits;

Parliamentary delegation: Members called on the Commission and the Council to ensure that Parliament continued to be closely involved in the preparation of the Ninth Ministerial Conference and to continue to make the case to other WTO Members for increasing the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the WTO, thereby increasing democratic legitimacy. Parliament called for the establishment of a permanent European parliamentary delegation to the WTO.