Resolution on the opening of FTA negotiations with Australia and New Zealand

2015/2932(RSP) - 25/02/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 479 votes to 123, with 17 abstentions, a resolution tabled by its Committee on International Trade, on the opening of FTA negotiations with Australia and New Zealand.

Parliament recalled that the EU, Australia and New Zealand are engaged in plurilateral negotiations to further liberalise trade in green goods (Environmental Goods Agreement) and trade in services (TiSA).

It underlined the importance of deepening relations between the EU and the Asia-Pacific region for economic growth and commended both Australia and New Zealand for their strong and consistent commitment to the multilateral trade agenda.

Parliament believed that the negotiation of two separate, modern, ambitious, balanced and comprehensive FTAs with Australia and New Zealand is a pragmatic way of deepening the bilateral partnerships. It stated that the **outcome of the negotiations may act as a template for future free trade agreements**.

The Commission is called upon to study in depth all additional market access opportunities for European economic operators, especially SMEs, offered by the possible FTAs with Australia and New Zealand.

Members stressed that ambitious agreements between the three advanced economies must address, in a meaningful way, **investment, trade in goods and services** (drawing on recent European Parliament recommendations as regards policy space reservations and sensitive sectors), e-commerce, public procurement, energy, state-owned enterprises, competition, anticorruption, regulatory issues such as sanitary and phytosanitary barriers, technology research and, especially, the needs of SMEs.

The possible agreements should fully take into account, in a separate chapter, the needs and interests of SMEs with regard to market access facilitation issues in order to generate concrete business opportunities.

Agriculture: Parliament noted that agriculture is a very sensitive sector and that a final, balanced outcome in the agriculture and fisheries chapters must give due consideration to the interests of all European producers, e.g. meat, dairy, sugar, cereal and, textile producers and those in the outermost regions.

Parliament called for the inclusion of effective bilateral safeguard measures to prevent a surge in imports that would cause, or threaten to cause, serious injury to European producers in sensitive sectors and for the implementation of specific measures to protect sensitive products from the outermost regions. Negotiations must result in strong and enforceable provisions covering the recognition and protection of intellectual property rights, including geographical indications (GIs).

Lastly, Parliament called on the Commission to make the launch of negotiations with Australia and New Zealand conditional on all parties committing at the outset to conduct negotiations as **transparently** as possible and fully respecting best practice as established in other negotiations and through constant dialogue with the social partners and civil society.