Conclusion of the EU-Canada CETA

2017/2525(RSP) - 15/02/2017

The European Parliament **rejected six motions for resolutions** on the conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada.

Members at the origin of the motions for resolutions tabled by the ENF, Greens/ EFA, GUE/NGL and EFDD groups called on the European Parliament to **refuse to give its consent to the conclusion of the CETA**.

- motion for a resolution tabled by the ENF group (rejected by 82 votes to 601, with 12 abstentions) emphasised the need for public debate prior to the opening of any further trade negotiations, together with a clear definition of undisputable standards such as the precautionary principle. It stated that the forced implementation of Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) procedures remains a serious problem as it gives rise to a system of parallel justice, allowing powerful enterprises to attack one of the fundamental pillars of Member States' sovereignty: the rule of law.

- motion for a resolution tabled by the Greens/EFA group (rejected by 134 votes to 498, with 67 abstentions) stating the fact CETA may undermine: (i) European democracy; (ii) European environmental standards and a green energy transition; (iii) European public welfare standards given that it contains service liberalisation by default, with insufficient exceptions for public services; (iv) European social standards; (v) sustainable European agriculture; (vi) a forward-looking European industrial policy.

- motion for a resolution tabled by the GUE/NGL group (rejected by 136 to 506, with 27 abstentions) which called in particular on the Commission to: (i) ensure that the sustainable development chapter aims at the full and effective ratification, implementation and enforcement of the eight fundamental International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and their content, the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, and the core international environmental agreements. Provisions must be aimed at further improving levels of protection of labour and environmental standards; (ii) firmly commit to the strict preservation of current and future standards on food safety and human health, plant health and crop and environmental protection, consumer protection and animal health and welfare, as defined under EU legislation. Members noted that CETA would allow foreign investors to sue EU Member States for laws they pass which affect investor profits, including those designed to protect public health, the environment or workers' rights.

- motion for a resolution tabled by the EFDD group called on the Commission to: (i) firmly commit to the strict maintenance of current and future standards on food safety and human and plant health, crop and environmental protection, and consumer protection as defined under EU legislation; (ii) ensure that the current CETA cooperation mechanism on the revision and harmonisation of GMO rules would not lower current EU standards; (iii) ensure that fundamental EU values, such as the precautionary principle and sustainable farming, are not undermined in future as well as the freedom of citizens to be informed about what they are buying in EU markets through proper EU traceability and labelling rules; (iv) guarantee respect for and insistence on the inclusion of European consumer protection, animal welfare and environmental protection standards and minimum social standards on agricultural products imported into the EU.

Parliament rejected two other motions for resolutions:

A motion for a resolution tabled by the S&D group recalling that EU trade policy must contribute to creating decent jobs, sustainable development, upholding EU standards, safeguarding public services and respecting democratic procedures while boosting EU export opportunities. It highlighted that Canada and

the EU have agreed not to weaken or reduce the levels of protection of labour or the environment in order to encourage trade or attract investment.

Despite the lack of clarity of the CETA text on public services, Members welcomed that all parties are committed to the idea that the EU and the governments of its Member States, at all levels, should retain the right to define, provide and regulate public services, including in the areas of health, education, social services, housing and provision of water.

They also called for the European Parliament to be fully involved in all stages of the establishment and future reviews of the Investment Court System (ICS), including in the nomination of judges for the tribunal and appellate tribunal and, among other things, in ensuring their independence and competence, as well as overseeing organisational aspects such as remuneration of judges.

Lastly, the motion for a resolution tabled by the EPP, ALDE and ECR groups (rejected by 314 votes to 355, with 27 abstentions) welcomed CETA as the most modern, progressive and extensive trade agreement that the EU has negotiated so far, which has the potential to create significant benefits for citizens and companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

Members stressed the fact that this agreement is an opportunity to set the rules and standards for global trade together with our strongest partner, ensuring that social, labour and environmental standards are not jeopardised.

The motion for a resolution welcomed the new Commission model for investment dispute resolution – the ICS. It called for the full involvement of Parliament in the implementation of the Agreement and on the Commission to regularly update Parliament on its provisional application.