

Resolution on multilateral negotiations in view of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (Buenos Aires, 10-13 December 2017)

2017/2861(RSP) - 15/11/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 510 votes to 53 with 112 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on International Trade on multilateral negotiations in view of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires from 10th to 13th December 2017.

Since its creation, the WTO has played a pivotal role in fostering an open, rule-based and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. At the same time, the EU has consistently advocated a strong multilateral rule-based approach to trade.

Members considered that the **WTO should be a negotiating forum** on all issues of interest to its members and provide a platform for open discussion on global trade-related issues.

Maintaining the multilateral trade architecture: Parliament reiterated its full commitment to the enduring value of multilateralism. It called for a **trade agenda based on free, fair and rule-based trade for the benefit of all, which supports the sustainable development agenda**. Such an agenda should give primary importance to social, environmental and human rights, and ensure that harmonised rules are uniformly applied to all.

Members wanted to build on the results already achieved so that tangible progress can be made at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference, to be held in Buenos Aires in December 2017, to preserve and consolidate the multilateral architecture of trade.

New challenges: given the changes in the world since the launch of the Doha Round in 2001, Parliament called for new challenges to be put on the agenda, such as (i) e-commerce and digital trade, (ii) investment transparency, (iii) subsidies and overcapacity, (iv) global value chains, (v) public procurement, (vi) domestic regulation for services, (vii) micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and greater compatibility between trade, labour and environmental agendas beyond the DDA. **Developing countries** need to be able to find their own approaches for continuing to ensure equal opportunities in these new sectors.

Parliament affirmed that the outcome of the 2017 Ministerial Conference should clearly recognise **the importance of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals** and of the Paris Agreement commitments in the fight against **climate change** and the role which trade can play in contributing towards their achievement.

It also urged that trade policy take into account **gender equality issues** by addressing the obstacles that limit women's prospects in the economy.

Members underlined the importance of concrete actions in order to **facilitate e-commerce** and turn digital opportunities into trade realities. They called on the Commission to continue its efforts towards developing a set of **binding multilateral disciplines** on e-commerce in the WTO. They also encouraged the resumption of the plurilateral trade negotiations on the Environmental Goods Agreement.

Litigation: stressing the crucial importance of the WTO for the rule-based trading system, Parliament expressed its utmost concern that **several posts on the WTO Appellate Body** remain vacant, which threatens to undermine the current and proper functioning of the dispute settlement. It insisted on a rapid decision on filling these posts.

Lastly, Members asked WTO members to ensure the **democratic legitimacy** and transparency of their organisation by strengthening its parliamentary dimension.