Resolution on measures to address the impact on European agriculture of the WTO ruling on the Airbus dispute

2019/2895(RSP) - 28/11/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on measures to address the impact on European agriculture of the WTO ruling on the Airbus dispute.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew and ECR groups.

Parliament expressed deep concern at the collateral damage that the EU agri-food sector is facing throughout the entire agri-food chain as a consequence of the decision taken by the United States to impose countermeasures on the European Union as a result of the Airbus dispute.

Agri-food exports worth EUR 4.3 billion (60 % of the total value of the countermeasures) will be hit by the new tariffs, which will be equivalent to EUR 1.1 billion. The main agricultural products targeted by the US sanctions will be emblematic EU products with a very high added value that are often protected under EU quality schemes (wines and spirits such as single malt whisky, olive oil, and dairy products such as butter and cheese).

Act in a coordinated manner to ease trade tensions

Members expressed deep regret over the USA's lack of engagement with the EU's attempts to find a timely negotiated solution ahead of the application of the tariffs as well as the US's refusal to work with the EU on a timely solution for the respective aircraft industries in the context of the long-standing AirbusBoeing dispute. They called on the Commission to continue to seek negotiated solutions to ease the current trade tensions between the two parties.

Parliament stressed the need for a coordinated and unified EU response, especially since the tariffs have been designed to unequally affect different Member States in an attempt to divide the Union's position.

Support to worst affected sectors

The Commission is called on to:

- investigate the impact of US countermeasures on the sectors affected and the internal market, and where justified, in accordance with WTO rules and within the limits of the budget, to mobilise rapid support for the sectors worst affected;

- closely monitor the EU agri-food market in order to detect, in a timely manner, disturbances arising from the application of the tariffs, the cumulative effects with other market developments, including those of the ongoing Russian embargo, and the knock-on effect of displaced products on the food supply chain;

- consider the use of tools under the Single Common Market Organisation (SCMO) Regulation), such as private storage schemes and market withdrawal, and any new or other available instruments and relevant measures to deal with disturbances that arise in the internal market;

- adapt the control and audit rules in such a way that operators will not be penalised as a result of unavoidable adaptations that they will have to make for promotion actions or for the non-execution of promotion actions that have already been planned;

- undertake horizontal information and promotion measures that may take the form of high-level missions, participation in trade fairs and exhibitions of international importance aimed at enhancing the image and increasing the promotion of the products concerned. Members called for an increase in promotion allocations for 2019 in order to prevent any delay in reacting quickly to the US countermeasures.

Under these circumstances, Parliament rejected further cuts to the CAP budget and called for the reform of the CAP crisis reserve to be pursued, since the agricultural sector is becoming increasingly volatile and is increasingly affected by politically motivated international crises, which require a strong and effective budgetary response.

While reaffirming its commitment to free trade and open markets, Parliament stressed the need to to diversify export markets and secure market access for the agri-food products affected by the US tariffs, by eliminating the persistent technical obstacles which have prevented operators from taking full advantage of the export possibilities under other trade agreements.