Resolution on the crisis of the WTO Appellate Body

2019/2918(RSP) - 28/11/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 506 votes to 46, with 61 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on International Trade on the crisis of the WTO Appellate Body.

The WTO Appellate Body plays a fundamental role in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute settlement system.

Since 2017, the United States has been blocking the replacement of any of the seven members of the Appellate Body and has rejected numerous proposals to launch the selection process to fill the remaining vacancies. On 10 December 2019, the mandates of two of the three remaining Appellate Body members will expire and the Appellate Body will no longer be able to hear any new appeals, as three members are needed to do so.

In response to this situation, Parliament expressed concern that, if a solution is not found, the WTO Appellate Body will cease to be operational after 10 December 2019, which could have very serious consequences for the rules-based multilateral trading system.

While fully supporting the informal process facilitated by Ambassador Walker as well as his proposals to be a very good basis for finding a satisfactory solution, Members invited all WTO Members to engage constructively in these discussions so that the vacancies can be filled as soon as possible, while ensuring that the WTO is equipped with financial and human resources in accordance with its needs. The Commission is called on to continue its engagement with all of the WTO Members, including the United States, in order to unblock the appointments procedure as a matter of priority.

Parliament supported recent EU initiatives to conclude interim arrangements for provisional solutions with our major trade partners that would preserve the European Union’s right to the resolution of trade disputes at the WTO through binding two-level, independent and impartial adjudication. It recalled however that a Standing Appellate Body remains the core objective of the EU’s strategy.