EU/Norway Agreement: modification of concessions on all the tariff-rate quotas included in the EU Schedule CLXXV as a consequence of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union

2020/0230(NLE) - 04/03/2021 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on International Trade adopted the report by Jörgen WARBORN (EPP, SE) on the proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion on behalf of the European Union, of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the Union and Norway relating to the modification of concessions on all the tariff-rate quotas included in the EU Schedule CLXXV as a consequence of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament give its consent to the conclusion of the agreement.

As a reminder, the EU formally launched the negotiation process (under Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994) with several WTO members in Geneva in October 2018.

The negotiations are based on a ‘joint approach’ developed in 2017 by the EU and the UK on how to ‘apportion’ the quantitative commitments contained in the EU-28's WTO schedule for the 143 EU agricultural, fish and industrial WTO tariff-rate quotas.

The aim is to maintain the full existing volume of each tariff quota in the future, but to divide it between two separate customs territories: the EU-27 and the UK.

The principle behind the applied methodology is based on trade flows to the EU-27 and the UK during a representative reference period (of three years between 2013 and 2015) for all WTO tariff-rate quotas.

On 15 June 2018, the Council authorised the Commission to launch negotiations under Article XXVIII GATT with the relevant WTO Members with a view to apportioning the Union's WTO concessions on tariff-rate quotas.

The negotiations with Norway resulted in an agreement in the form of an exchange of letters which was initialled in Geneva on 7-8 July 2020.