# Environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade

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By adopting - against some opposition - a motion for a resolution on environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade, the committee warned that WTO rules, as they were being interpreted, adversely affected the application of Community legislation in non-economic fields.The motion, which is contained in a report drafted by Mr Carlos PIMENTA (EPP, P) under the procedure governing international agreements, contends that the WTO texts currently in force establish the prevalence of freedom of trade over the aims of environmentally and socially sustainable development.It notes, furthermore, that the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment has proved incapable of reaching agreed solutions and suggests the establishment of a WTO Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development. According to the motion, "solutions to serious global environmental problems, such as climate change, deforestation, the degradation of the marine environment and the public health hazards posed by endocrine disrupters cannot wait for the WTO to sort out its own internal difficulties."Referring to a WTO ministerial conference due to meet in Geneva on 18 and 19 May 1998, the committee calls on the Commission and the Member States to seek the agreement of their WTO partners to a binding declaration or decision on non-economic principles, warning that, in the event of failure by Ministers to make progress in this regard, Parliament will be forced to reconsider its posture towards the WTO. The committee wants the WTO to draw up a statement of understanding differentiating between otherwise identical products on the basis of their varying impact on the environment.