Competition policy: strengthening international cooperation and rules

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Adopting the report by Mr KITTELMANN, the Committee on External Economic Relations called for the early opening of negotiations, in the run up to the Singapore Conference (December 1996), on the introduction, within the framework of the World Trade Organization, of minimum competition rules in the multilateral world trade system. The absence of such rules, or the inability to ensure that they are respected, was a major obstacle to cross-border economic activity. The committee emphasized in the proposal for a resolution attached to the report that the World Trade Organization (WTO) was the international body best qualified to draw up and negotiate international competition rules. Such rules should be based on principles of non-discrimination and transparency and should relate to areas such as abuse of a dominant position, restrictive practice agreements between firms (cartels) and merger control. International competition rules would also allow antidumping measures to be adopted and the relevant national authorities to exchange confidential information. The committee considered that the adoption of competition rules and a code of conduct at EU level would form a useful basis on which to adopt international competition rules. Finally, the committee also called for an international competition authority to be established within the WTO.