# Environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade

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In adopting the report by Mr Carlos PIMENTA (PPE, P) on environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade, the European Parliament reiterated and reaffirmed its position with regard to trade and the environment as formulated in its previous resolutions since January 1993. It called once again for the work of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) to be reinvigorated as regards Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), Ecolabelling, Non-product-related Process and Production Methods (PPMs), Transparency and Domestically Prohibited Goods, and for the agreements on environmental aspects of Trade Related Intellectual Property and Services to begin in earnest so that the Committee could truly fulfil its mandate before the year 2000. The CTE should in particular be mandated to explore solutions for the full integration into the WTO's system of fundamental principles relating to the environment, public health, cultural and ethical diversity and values and animal welfare. Parliament called for the precautionary principle to be explicitly established as the primary basis for decisions which have a bearing on public health and consumer protection. It urged the Member States to seek a binding Declaration to give political momentum to this process. This was vital to the credibility of the WTO's policy in the eyes of public opinion. Parliament added that, in the event of failure, it would reconsider its posture towards the WTO. It called on the Commission to advocate at the WTO ministerial conference in Geneva (May 1998) that the WTO should draw up an Understanding concerning the application of the principle of 'like products' enabling otherwise similar products to be differentiated where their production or processing had different impacts on the environment. It renewed its request for a Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development to be set up within the WTO in parallel to, or as a special meeting of, its General Council. It instructed its President to enter into a dialogue with the Director-General of the WTO to work out formal arrangements as to how Parliament should be kept informed about all the ongoing work of the WTO across the whole range of its activities.