Multilateral commercial relations: the European Union and the developing partner countries of the EU

1997/2301(INI) - 04/05/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution by Alex Smith (PSE,UK) on multilateral commercial relations: the European Union and the developing partner countries of the European Union. The report strongly suppports the EU proposals for all industrialised Members of the WTO to bind their tariffs to 0-duties on "essentially all products" exported by developing countries by the year 2003, and no later than 2005. The Parliament calls on the EU to back its promises to the ACP on flexibility in regional arrangements offered to them. The Council and the Commission are called upon to use the first summit of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Rio in June 1999, as an opportunity to secure an agreement to encourage the development of trade relations between these regions with a view to achieving greater liberalisation and achieving a free trade area. The Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to speed up the negotiations under way with Mexico, as well as those with Mercosur and Chile so that they can be completed by 31/12/99. It also calls for the review of the special and differential treatment for developing countries to be linked to a commitment, on their part, to respect for the core ILO labour standards and for increased WTO cooperation with all UN agencies with a competence in areas related to trade and sustainable development. The report calls on all WTO members to ensure that the agenda for new multi-lateral negotiations (end 1999) clearly reflects the ultimate objective of sustainable development to the benefit of all. It calls for an examination of how the WTO could effectively play a part in promoting sustainable development and the taking into account of labour standards and environmental concerns as necessary pre-requisites to this. It calls on EU negotiators to work on the implementation of this "agenda for action" and keep the European Parliament fully briefed throughout the negotiations.