Resolution on the fourth WTO Ministerial Conference

2001/2616(RSP) - 25/10/2001 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Parliament has adopted a resolution on the basis of a joint motion tabled by the PPE-DE, PSE and ELDR Groups on the preparation for the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) after a lengthy and detailed debate in the plenary chamber. Parliament supports a new round of multilateral trade negotiations with a broad agenda as a means of fostering sustainable economic growth, strengthening, developing and reforming the rules-based trade system and ensuring a fair distribution of its benefits. It notes that the anxieties expressed by citizens of the EU and elsewhere over the role of the WTO essentially concern three issues: the fairness of the world trade system, the need for institutional reform and the danger that the increasingly important role of the WTO could be detrimental to the pursuit of public policies in other areas. Consequently, Parliament believes that the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference should agree on a negotiating agenda that responds satisfactorily to the issues enumerated above. The other immediate priority concerns the developing countries and their integration into the world trade system. To this end, Parliament also calls for: - a substantial reduction, by all industrialised countries, of barriers to agricultural exports from developing countries, - the creation of a consultative WTO Parliamentary Assembly, - the mainstreaming of environmental protection through its inclusion in all WTO agreements, - the inclusion of competition policy in the negotiating agenda, and - the creation of a multilateral legal framework for foreign direct investment.