Assessment of the Doha Round following the WTO agreement on 1 August 2004

2004/2138(INI) - 12/05/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The House adopted by 437 votes in favour, to 94 against with 12 abstentions, an own-initiative report on the Doha Round following the WTO agreement on 1 August 2004.

Firstly, Parliament reiterates its resolute support for a free and fair multilateral trade system to promote trade and to contribute to sustainable development and to the effective management of globalisation for the benefit of all.

The Commission is requested to call for rapid progress in all the areas covered by the Decision, so as to enable it to go to Hong Kong in December 2005 with a balanced, far-reaching proposal which will place development at the forefront of the debate.

Parliament asks for the state of play report scheduled by the WTO General Council for July 2005 to be strictly factual, so as not to raise false expectations amongst the public, and asks that a date be set for concluding the work of the Doha Round, taking due account of the time required for all the negotiators to prepare themselves, particularly those of the developing countries.

The Commission is asked to consider the possibility of introducing a "development box" for the LDCs into the agriculture negotiations, so that they can tackle food safety and rural employment, which are major issues when it comes to eradicating poverty.

Members of the WTO are urged to devote equal attention to the three pillars (export subsidies, domestic aids and market access). It asks for these measures to be applied in parallel by all developed-country WTO members, so as to avoid unilateral disarmament on the part of the EU, while applying special and differential treatment to the developing countries.

As regards the CAP reform, Parliament urges the Commission to continue with the planned reform. It states that agriculture is indeed the most important chapter within these negotiations, but points out that this must be the driving force and that progress in this field must be used as leverage and as a negotiating asset in order to make progress in other areas, particularly on trade in services and better access to industrial goods for all WTO members, by effectively reducing import duties and other trade barriers.

It stresses the high level of EU market access for agricultural products from developing countries and calls on other developed partners and emergent countries to proceed to further opening up their markets towards the LDCs.

The Commission is called upon to step up negotiations on NAMA, defining an appropriate formula for eliminating or reducing high tariffs, tariff peaks and tariff escalation, and likewise to study the possibility of partial reciprocity on the part of the developing countries, taking due account of the flexibility they require and applying to them, as to the LDCs, the special and differential treatment principle. It stresses, furthermore, that important trade and development benefits will be ensured through South-South market opening, particularly on the part of the more advanced developing economies. It equally points out the need for the removal of non-tariff barriers, where justified, by all trading partners.

Lastly, Parliament reiterates the need, acknowledged in the Millennium Declaration, to establish closer relations between the WTO and other international organisations, as an essential stage in the process of

achieving a different, more sustainable type of globalisation, which will work in the service of common goals and with a view to achieving fully coordinated criteria with regard to the problems of development; believes that in this connection. All WTO Member States should of necessity respect the rules of the International Labour Organization.