Resolution on the suspension of negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda

2006/2615(RSP) - 07/09/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a joint resolution on the suspension of negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda, and stated that a failure to conclude the Doha Round would challenge the credibility of the multilateral trading system. This would result in a shift towards bilateral and regional trade agreements, which often accentuated imbalances between the developed and the developing world, putting the poorer countries at a disadvantage. Parliament reiterated its full commitment to the multilateral approach to trade policy and the role that the WTO should play as the guarantor of a rules-based international trade system. It regretted, therefore, the suspension of the Doha Round negotiations in July 2006 and was especially disappointed that insufficient flexibility on the part of some of the major players had led to deadlock. The short- and medium-term consequences of this suspension would affect the developing countries and the LDCs most, especially if pro-development commitments entered into in Hong Kong were no longer respected. This was due to the fact that the long-awaited rebalancing of trade rules, putting trade at the service of sustainable development and respecting the wider system of global governance, could not be achieved outside the multilateral framework. Furthermore, the suspension of the multilateral negotiations could result in the expansion of trade disputes, whereby WTO members would try to achieve by litigation what could not be achieved by negotiation.

Parliament urged a strong commitment on the part of all major players, including the EU, the US and the G-20, to come to a balanced agreement on each of the Round's main negotiation topics, putting development at the heart of the conclusions. The developed countries should continue to create more favourable trading conditions for the developing countries and the LDCs, independently of the final outcome of the round. Parliament called on the developed and advanced developing countries to follow the EU Everything but Arms initiative, guaranteeing 100% duty- and quota-free market access for the LDCs.

Underlining the need for institutional reforms to improve the functioning of the WTO, Parliament spoke of the importance of enhancing the accountability and democratic legitimacy of the WTO negotiations and organisation. The multilateral process based on the bottom-up and transparent approach should be at the core of the negotiations.

Finally, Parliament called on the Commission and the Council to establish an agreement to ensure full participation of the European Parliament in the European Union's international trade negotiations.