Basic information

2005/2628(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation WTO in Hong Kong **Subject** 6.20.01 Agreements and relations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)	

Key players

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2722	2006-04-10
General Affairs	2687	2005-11-07
General Affairs	2691	2005-11-21
Agriculture and Fisheries	2692	2005-11-22
Agriculture and Fisheries	2685	2005-10-24

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
18/10/2005	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
24/10/2005	Debate in Council		
07/11/2005	Debate in Council		
21/11/2005	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
22/11/2005	Debate in Council		Summary
30/11/2005	Debate in Parliament		
01/12/2005	Decision by Parliament	T6-0461/2005	Summary
01/12/2005	Results of vote in Parliament		
01/12/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		
10/04/2006	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2005/2628(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Resolution on statement

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 136-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Motion for a resolution		B6-0619/2005	30/11/2005	
Motion for a resolution		B6-0620/2005	30/11/2005	
Motion for a resolution		B6-0621/2005	30/11/2005	
Motion for a resolution		B6-0624/2005	30/11/2005	
Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects		T6-0461/2005	01/12/2005	Summary
Other institutions and bodies				
Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1263/2005 OJ C 028 03.02.2006, p. 0090-0096	27/10/2005	

Resolution on preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation WTO in Hong Kong

2005/2628(RSP) - 01/12/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Parliament considers it essential that the Doha Round must succeed in order to strengthen the multilateral trade system so as to ensure the progress and harmonious development of the world economy. It reaffirms its strong support for placing development at the heart of the Doha Round and stresses that the negotiations must serve the purpose of eradicating poverty and bringing about fairer distribution of the benefits of globalisation. On the other hand, it regrets the slow progress made during the negotiations prior to Hong Kong and calls for a constructive 6th Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong so as to pave the way for a successful completion of the Doha Development Agenda in 2006.

All stakeholders, especially all developed and more advanced countries, are called upon to assume their responsibilities in the run-up to Hong Kong in order to bring the round closer to a successful conclusion; considers that all parties should make efforts commensurate with their stage of development and negotiating power.

Agriculture : the resolutionrecalls that the result to be achieved in Hong Kong on agriculture must include a timely phasing-out of all export subsidies, in parallel, by all developed-country WTO members, including those granted in the form of food aid or through state-trading entities and other export subsidies. It stresses that a substantial reduction in trade-distorting domestic support and a significant improvement in market access are equally needed. In this respect, Parliament reiterates its support for the CAP reform. The concept of the multifunctional character of EU agriculture should be respected within the trade negotiations and Parliament upholds the EU's emphasis on non-trade concerns in order to safeguard food quality and safety, the protection of the environment, rural employment and development. Moreover, Parliament calls for effective recognition of geographical indications, as a factor in regional development and a means of sustaining cultural traditions, to be achieved in the current round and insists on the importance of finding a solution with regard to sensitive products which fully respects the principles of the Doha Development Round. It equally calls for an effective solution to be found in respect of cotton and emphasises in this regard that all export-related support for cotton in the developed countries must be eliminated by 2010 and calls especially on the US to follow the EU in reforming its cotton market.

Non-agricultural market access (NAMA): Parliament emphasises that the WTO negotiations on NAMA should be accelerated as soon as possible. It considers that trade barriers between developed countries and developing countries, but also among developing countries, are an obstacle to sustainable development. In the interests of a further progressive south-south market opening, it is vital for the more advanced countries to shoulder their responsibility by opening their markets to the LDCs. It is also noted that it is of strategic importance that all trading partners, where justified, also remove their non-tariff barriers, since these hamper market access and may do so even more when tariff barriers are further reduced.

Services: Parliament recognises that it is necessary for the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference to lay the foundations for an ambitious agreement on trade in services, enhancing, on the one hand, market access for EU service providers, and safeguarding, on the other, the ability of all WTO

members, in accordance with the GATS Agreement, to regulate their services sectors. It notes that the EU has a strong interest in expanding export opportunities for service providers and considers that substantive progress must be made in this field, with an exception for health, education and audiovisual services. Parliament urges the developed and emerging WTO members to exhibit the same level of commitment as contained in the EU's revised offer of January 2005 and to submit commensurate offers. It equally stresses that, given the lack of progress in the Doha negotiations so far, supplementary approaches entailing further market opening in the field of services should be investigated, with due regard for the interests of LDCs and calls for greater transparency in GATS negotiations.

Development issues: Parliament strongly believes that trade coupled with aid and debt relief is essential to the achievement of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals and calls for concrete results with regard to the development aspects of the Doha Round already to be achieved during the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. It considers that the application of Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) should form an integral part of the WTO Agreements. Developed countries are called upon to open their markets through tariff- and quota-free access for all goods from the LDCs, as already realised by the European Union, in particular as a result of the 'Everything but Arms' initiative. Parliament fully supports the idea of a 'free round' for the least developed and vulnerable countries and stresses that this would be an important stimulus for north-south trade. Moreover, Parliament calls for a coherent 'aid for trade' facility for developing countries that will need assistance to build the capacity necessary for them to realise benefits from improvements in market access and trade rules and also to enable them to diversify their production bases, to replace customs resources with other fiscal resources and to fulfil the commitments given within the WTO. A permanent solution has to be found, as a matter of urgency, in the field of TRIPs (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) and TRIMs (Trade-Related Investment Measures) so as to ensure access to medicines for countries with no manufacturing capacity that are facing public health concerns.

Further topics: Parliamentstresses the importance of trade facilitation for enhancing the exchange of goods and services among countries, notably developing countries. It insists on clarification of, and a significant reduction of red tape in, customs procedures. Progress is called for in the area of TRIPs and for action against counterfeiting and piracy and it considers that the fulfilment of these goals will strengthen the multilateral trade system.

WTO reform and transparency: Parliament calls on the Commission to keep it fully informed, before and during the Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong and throughout the negotiations, and to engage in a regular dialogue on the essential elements of the EU negotiating mandate. It recalls the right acquired at the end of the Uruguay Round to subject the conclusion of the results of the subsequent rounds to the European Parliament's assent. The importance of maintaining public and political support for the WTO multilateral trade system is stressed. Lastly, Parliament insists on a much-needed WTO reform, including an improvement of the negotiating procedures, in order to improve efficiency and transparency and to reach a degree of consensus among WTO members and it equally underlines the importance of reforming the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism.

Resolution on preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation WTO in Hong Kong

2005/2628(RSP) - 22/11/2005

Commissioner Fisher-Boel provided an update on the latest state of play of the WTO-DDA negotiations. She indicated that the level of ambition with a view to the ministerial meeting in Hong-Kong (13-18 December 2005) had been lowered since last October, but that the level of final ambition for the Doha Round remained intact. The main goal for Hong-Kong was now to reach an agreement on a framework rather than on the whole package and to make sizeable progress on the Development package. She reminded the delegations that, unlike other WTO members, the EU had tabled a revised conditional offer on agriculture on 28 October, as part of a meaningful contribution to the process of negotiations. She indicated that Commissioner Mandelson had met the G4 (EU, US, Brazil, India) and Japan in Geneva on 22 November with a view to taking stock of the positions of the different ministerial delegations before Hong-Kong.

The French delegation thanked the Commissioner and welcomed the absence of new concessions before, during or after Hong-Kong, having noted that the most concerned WTO parties had not reacted to the last EU offer on agriculture, and that the offer constituted the limit as to what the EU could propose without putting at stake the outcome of the CAP reform in June 2003. The French delegation also regretted that the expert working party had not been able to conclude on the socio-economic effects of the EU revised offer on agriculture nor whether it jeopardised the reformed CAP. The French delegation recalled its position that the package presented in Hong-Kong should be global and balanced and, with the support of the Irish delegation, that it should not contain any bands of figures. The French delegation also welcomed the initiative on cotton taken by the Commission as well as the duty free access for Least developed countries and protection against erosion of existing preferences. The delegation of the Netherlands expressed its appreciation of the position taken by the Commissioner and underlined the importance of the Development package.

Resolution on preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation WTO in Hong Kong

2005/2628(RSP) - 21/11/2005

The Council heard an update from the Commission on the state of the negotiations, ahead of the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference. It recalled its conclusions of October 18, 2005 and in particular the commitment by the Commission that the Council is fully informed of the developments in the negotiations, and that its action remained in line with the mandate it has received from the Council. In this context, the Council welcomes confirmation by the Commission that cotton will be dealt with in negotiations on the basis of the 30 July 2004 Framework Agreement.

The Council reconfirmed the objective of a comprehensive, balanced and ambitious agreement within and across all the main elements of the Doha Agenda. In light of its commitment to the needs of developing countries, and in particular least developed countries, the Council expressed its support for an ambitious development package at Hong Kong.

The Council confirmed that it would meet in special session throughout the Conference in order to provide the Commission with any further necessary guidance in the final stage of the negotiations and, in accordance with its practice, take a position on any draft WTO ministerial Declaration resulting from the negotiations, and take any necessary decisions in this connection.