Basic information

2011/2623(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on EU-Canada trade relations **Subject** 6.20.03 Bilateral economic and trade agreements and relations **Geographical area** Canada	

Key players

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Trade and Economic Security	DE GUCHT Karel

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
06/06/2011	Debate in Parliament		Summary
08/06/2011	Decision by Parliament	T7-0257/2011	Summary
08/06/2011	Results of vote in Parliament		
08/06/2011	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2011/2623(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Debate or resolution on oral question/interpellation
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142-p5
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Oral question/interpellation by Parliament		B7-0213/2011	07/04/2011	
Motion for a resolution		B7-0344/2011	26/05/2011	

Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0257/2011	08/06/2011	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2011)8071	24/10/2011	

Resolution on EU-Canada trade relations

2011/2623(RSP) - 08/06/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 6 June 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on International Trade on EU-Canada trade relations.

It notes that the current negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) aim at a very advanced agreement, exceeding in its level of ambition any trade and economic agreement negotiated either by the EU or by Canada to date, that could reinforce the already strong bilateral trade and investment relationship even further. Whilst reaffirming support for the multilateral trading system embodied in the WTO, Members welcome an agreement with Canada going beyond the WTO commitments and being complementary to multilateral rules, provided that the negotiations produce a balanced, ambitious, high-quality agreement that goes well beyond tariff reductions. They call for the reciprocity principle to be applied in the context of the legal remedies available in the event of commercial disputes and emphasise the need to improve the protection of intellectual property rights including trademarks, patents and geographical indications and to obtain genuinely reciprocal access to the market, especially to services and public procurement markets (including at sub-federal level). The chapter on intellectual property should not negatively affect the production of generic medicines and must respect the TRIPs exceptions for public health.

Parliament welcomes the progress made in the CETA negotiations and calls on the Commission to carry out as soon as possible a comprehensive sustainability impact assessment evaluating the foreseeable sectoral implications and socioeconomic consequences for the EU arising from the final agreement. It notes that competence for EU-Canada relations resides at the federal level alone, but, since the Canadian provinces and territories are responsible for implementing the treaty obligations that fall within their jurisdiction, considers essential, and welcomes, their participation in the CETA negotiations and encourages the provinces and territories to synchronise policies and procedures to allow potential gains to be maximised. A successful negotiation should include explicit commitments from provincial and territorial governments.

Parliament notes, not without concern, that the Commission submitted to the Council a proposal for modifying the negotiating directives authorising the Commission to negotiate with Canada on investment without waiting for Parliament to adopt its position on the future EU investment policy in general. It calls on the Commission to take fully into account the conclusion of the European Parliament on this subject in its negotiations on investment with Canada. Given the highly developed legal systems of Canada and the EU, a state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism and the use of local judicial remedies are the most appropriate tools to address investment disputes. Members call on the Commission to ensure that a potential investor-to-state dispute settlement mechanism does not inhibit future legislation in sensitive policy areas, such as environmental legislation, and is embedded in broader requirements as outlined in Parliament's resolution on future European international investment policy.

Parliament expresses concern about the following issues:

- the continued mining of asbestos in Canada and its grave impact on workers' health. Members recall that the EU has banned all use, extraction and processing of asbestos and manufacture of asbestos products, and they call on Canada to take similar action in order to improve public health;
- the impact of the extraction of oil sand on the global environment due to the high level of CO2 emissions during its production process and the threat it poses to local biodiversity. Members feel that the CETA negotiations should not affect the EU's right to legislate in the fuel quality directive or inhibit the ability of the Canadian authorities to introduce future environmental standards concerning the extraction of oil sands. They encourage both parties to resolve any disagreements amicably and without endangering the CETA negotiations;
- the recent legal developments regarding the EU's ban on seal products, in particular Canada's request to the WTO for the establishment of a formal dispute resolution panel. Members expect the Commission to remain firm on the EU's stance regarding the ban on seal products, and they express strong hope that Canada will withdraw the WTO challenge, which runs counter to positive trade relations, prior to the need for ratification of the CETA agreement by the European Parliament.

Members also make the following points:

- the Commission is asked to exclude from the scope of investment agreements sensitive sectors such as culture, education, national defence and public health;
- with regard to the agriculture chapters, Members are concerned about possibly substantial concessions in the area of GMOs, milk and origin labelling, and call on the Commission to negotiate an agreement which will be beneficial to EU and Canadian consumers and to the agricultural sectors on both sides as well, and ensure, within a balanced overall outcome, greater – but fair – competition among EU and Canadian suppliers to provide agricultural goods. They welcome the initial commitment from both parties not to maintain, introduce or reintroduce agricultural export subsidies on the agricultural goods traded.

Lastly, Parliament reminds the Council and Commission that, since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Council has been required to obtain the consent of Parliament for all international trade agreements and both the Council and the Commission have been required to keep Parliament immediately and fully informed at all stages of the procedure. It calls on the Council to provide Parliament immediately with all information in the stages of the procedure for which it is responsible and to keep Parliament involved at all stages of the negotiations and to take Parliament's views fully into account.