

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, Session document

Motion for a Resolution on the WTO Conference presented by the GUE/NGL Group

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We are reproducing below the motion presented at the European Parliament by the European United Left / Nordic Green Left Group (GUE/NGL) on the coming WTO conference. This is not a document adopted by the European Parliament.

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TitreType: MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

TitreSuite: to wind up the debate on statements by the Council and Commission

TitreRecueil: pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Deputies Helmuth Markov, Vittorio Agnoletto, Jacky Henin, Jonas Sjöstedt and Pedro Guerreiro

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Titre: On preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation in Hong Kong

B6?0628/2005

European Parliament resolution on preparations for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation in Hong Kong

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Articles 36, 27 and 133 thereof,
- having regard to the Doha Ministerial Declaration of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) of 14 November 2001,
- having regard to the Decision adopted by the General Council on 1 August 2004 on the Doha Work Programme,

- having regard to the Council conclusions on the WTO Doha Development Agenda of 18 October 2005,
- having regard to the EU proposal for negotiation 'Making Hong Kong a Success: Europe's Contribution - Brussels, 28 October 2005',
- having regards to Unesco's recent adoption of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,
- having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. considering the effects of the WTO agreements and current strategy of quick market opening and deregulation in terms of human rights, social standards, public health, environment and cultural diversity worldwide,

B. whereas these policies represent the accentuated negative influence on poor countries of corporate enterprises and private investors,

C. whereas this orientation of the EC's external trade policy is directly linked to the strategy of lowering salary costs and social standards, increasing company relocations and liberalising public services, to the detriment of the environment and of culture in the European Union and developing countries,

D. whereas this policy and pressures exerted by the international financial institutions (the IMF, World Bank etc.) for liberalisation have created a wide movement of protest and call for alternatives to neo-liberalism,

E. whereas the Commission and the Council are focusing the external trade policy of the EU on an obsession with liberalisation, not only in the WTO but also in the free trade agreements that the EU is trying to impose on the ACP countries (economic partnership agreements - EPAs) or other regions (Latin America, the Mediterranean, etc.),

F. whereas the late tabling on 28 October 2005 by the EU of requests for market access, consisting of a systematic lowering of customs duties on non-agricultural products (NAMA) and a massive opening in service sector (GATS) in return for concessions in agriculture negotiations, has contributed to deepening even more the divergences of positions and reveals how far we are from the so called 'development round' that was announced,

G. whereas this insistence by the Commission and the Council on imposing the liberalisation of services - which goes beyond even the Doha agenda - is also present in its intent to impose the directive on services, known as the Bolkenstein Directive, and has led to opposition by the European social movement,

H. whereas the current liberalisation in agriculture, and dumping policies, only benefit agribusiness companies and lead to the disappearance of farmers both in developed and developing countries, with very negative consequences for food sovereignty, food security, the environment and social issues,

I. whereas the export subsidies of the industrialised countries have broken the local economies of developing countries, producing enormous benefits for agribusiness, but catastrophic consequences in terms of food sovereignty and hunger; whereas the market in agricultural products should be re-localised,

J. whereas liberalisation of services is a priority only for multinational companies and whereas most developing countries, as well as European citizens, are against it; whereas the reinforcing of public services is essential for the development of social justice,

K. whereas the recent question of massive Chinese textile imports shows that the simple liberalisation of markets between very unequal partners with, or in the total absence of, the harmonisation of social, fiscal and environmental standards brings about unacceptable social regression and condemns whole sections of economic activity to extinction and the loss of millions of jobs in Europe and elsewhere, as is the case in textiles, but also in many other sectors (shoes, car manufacturing and the steel industry),

L. whereas all industrialised countries have been able to develop their industry with a certain level of protection and this right must be recognised for all countries, allowing them to open their borders when they consider it opportune,

M. whereas many European investors are benefiting from liberalisation by flooding the European market and by relocating their activities so as to avoid their social and environmental obligations,

N. whereas the Commission is systematically dismantling all the mechanisms designed to stabilise the price of commodities (Stabex, Sysmin, the sugar CMO, banana markets) under the pretext of complying with the WTO, with serious consequences for the economies of developing countries and for European farmers, instead of reinforcing them and creating new mechanisms, as necessary for their development,

O. whereas the TRIPS agreements constitute a barrier that makes it more difficult to combat epidemics, and whereas the survival of millions of people is far more important than the profits of a few large pharmaceutical laboratories; whereas the exceptions granted at Doha and by the August 2003 decision, which should be temporary pending a reform of the Agreement, have not brought about the anticipated solutions,

P. whereas in the letter by the 41-member African Group of developing countries, sent to the Chair of the WTO Trade Negotiations Committee Pascal Lamy on 8 November 2005, this Group voices its dissatisfaction that the Doha negotiations are not moving in a direction that will lead to any meaningful progress on issues of concern to African countries,

1. Condemns the position of the European Commission in trying to impose market access and deregulation and to make the abolition of agribusiness export subsidies - that are having a drastic impact on the economies of the developing countries - conditional on the opening of the market of developing countries in the negotiation of non agricultural products (NAMA) and services (GATS);
2. Calls for revision of the mandate conferred on the Trade Commissioner by the governments and, instead of concentrating the strategy of the EU on liberalisation and market access for corporate businesses, orienting it towards the concerns of most European citizens, such as company relocations, de-industrialisation, unemployment, the fall in social standards, food safety problems, and treating culture as a marketable good and the major challenges to civilisation such as the question of development - and in particular hunger, AIDS, and other pandemics;
3. Calls for the rights to food sovereignty and food safety to be recognised as absolute priorities for all countries; considers that all countries have a right to take the necessary measures to that end, and considers that a body like the WTO that works to a commercial logic cannot regulate those issues;
4. Calls on the European Union and the other industrialised countries to eliminate export subsidies

on agricultural products immediately, without any reciprocity;

5. Considers that the CAP must be reformed and, instead of supporting agribusiness and giant farm-holdings, should serve to support a genuinely sustainable agriculture and only benefit real farmers and the defence of the social, environmental and territorial functions of agriculture;

6. Opposes the intention to lower massively the duties on NAMA products and considers that the right to industrialise is a development right; considers that each country must be free to decide how to develop, at what pace to open its borders, depending on the degree of development of the various economic sectors, and with which partners to cooperate;

7. Asks the Commission to support the processing industries of the developing countries, and to reinforce their national and regional markets, by no longer limiting them to the role of raw material providers;

8. Asks the Commission to cut all subsidies to those European companies that relocate their activities outside the European Union with the aim of avoiding their social and environmental obligations;

9. Asks the Commission and the Council of the European Union, as a world trade power, to act against dumping and to make social and environmental standards obligatory and back them up with sanctions (like the WTO trade standards); considers that initiatives such as the negotiation of the Americas Social Charter, by the OAS (Organisation of American States), and the fair-trade networks should be supported further by the European Union and favoured in international negotiations at the WTO;

10. Opposes the Commission's insistence on liberalisation of services worldwide, by imposition of benchmarks etc, and asks it to fully respect the liberty of each country to decide whether or not to include a service sector in the GATS negotiations;

11. Considers that public services must be excluded from any trade agreements as a minimum, and in any case the EU should demand the explicit exclusion of health, education, culture (including the audio-visual sector) and the environment (including water management) from the list of services to which GATS applies;

12. Calls for the exclusion of several sectors essential for the survival of humanity from the domain of the WTO; points out that this is the case, for example, of water, which must urgently be declared a universal public good and excluded from the market field;

13. Asks the Commission to propose reform of the agreements on intellectual property (TRIPS) so as to avoid organised piracy and the patenting of living organisms and to prevent them from continuing to hinder the fight against epidemics such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, avian flu etc;

14. Is concerned at the level of product piracy and considers that the mechanisms to combat it must be reinforced; at the same time, considers that a TRIPS revision is also urgent to facilitate the better transfer of technology towards developing countries,

15. Supports the proposal by developing countries to prohibit the patenting of life and to protect biodiversity and supports the right of farmers' free access to traditional seeds; opposes the production and import of GMO products and of sterile seeds in Europe;

16. Urges the Commission to widely defend the precautionary principle, particularly concerning the propagation of GMOs, but also other questions such as importing hormone-treated meat or issues

concerning public health and environment,

17. Welcomes Unesco's recent adoption of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and calls on the Commission to defend the pre-eminent importance of its application to the WTO rules;

18. Calls for the formation or reinforcement of international and interregional agreements that seek to improve and stabilise the price of commodities;

19. Calls on the Commission to pursue with vigour a revision of GATT Article 24, and insists on the importance of non-reciprocity in relations between developed and developing countries; calls on the Commission to reconsider the EPA negotiation in order to preserve the ACP-EU agreement as a development tool and a real partnership;

20. Calls on the Commission to push for democratisation of the WTO, and to secure the establishment of a hierarchy of international legislation, giving priority to the three predominant international instruments (human rights; civil and political rights; and economic, social and cultural rights) as well as environmental standards and other conventions, notably the Convention on the Elimination of any Form of Discrimination against Women;

21. Considers that the Dispute Settlement Body must leave the WTO, and that a juridical body must be created, composed of qualified magistrates who respect the concept of an independent justice and will base their decisions on the various fields of international law;

22. Asks the Commission, in the short term, to support developing countries, and notably the G33, that are calling for the democratisation of the WTO's internal procedures, in order to establish a methodology that would be global, transparent and include all the member states and that bans antidemocratic practices such as the negotiation in closed circles (Green Room, etc.) of texts that are then presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis;

23. Asks the Member States to use their power in the international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank, etc.) to stop the policy of imposing conditions on the development countries in order to open their markets, and to accelerate cancellation of the external debt of developing countries;

24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, and to the parliaments of the WTO member states and of the applicant countries, the Director-General of the WTO and the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.