


Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1997/2157(INI)
Procedure completed	
Environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade	
Subject	
4.60 Consumers' protection in general	
5.03 Global economy and globalisation	
6.20.01 Agreements and relations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ENVI Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection	PPE PIMENTA Carlos	02/07/1997

Key events			
16/01/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
15/04/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
15/04/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0125/1998	
29/04/1998	Debate in Parliament		
30/04/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0246/1998	Summary
30/04/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
18/05/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2157(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 114
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/4/09082

Documentation gateway				
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0125/1998	15/04/1998	EP

		OJ C 152 18.05.1998, p. 0004			
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0246/1998 OJ C 152 18.05.1998, p. 0020-0078	30/04/1998	EP	Summary

Environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade

By adopting - against some opposition - a motion for a resolution on environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade, the committee warned that WTO rules, as they were being interpreted, adversely affected the application of Community legislation in non-economic fields. The motion, which is contained in a report drafted by Mr Carlos PIMENTA (EPP, P) under the procedure governing international agreements, contends that the WTO texts currently in force establish the prevalence of freedom of trade over the aims of environmentally and socially sustainable development. It notes, furthermore, that the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment has proved incapable of reaching agreed solutions and suggests the establishment of a WTO Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development. According to the motion, "solutions to serious global environmental problems, such as climate change, deforestation, the degradation of the marine environment and the public health hazards posed by endocrine disrupters cannot wait for the WTO to sort out its own internal difficulties." Referring to a WTO ministerial conference due to meet in Geneva on 18 and 19 May 1998, the committee calls on the Commission and the Member States to seek the agreement of their WTO partners to a binding declaration or decision on non-economic principles, warning that, in the event of failure by Ministers to make progress in this regard, Parliament will be forced to reconsider its posture towards the WTO. The committee wants the WTO to draw up a statement of understanding differentiating between otherwise identical products on the basis of their varying impact on the environment. ?

Environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade

In adopting the report by Mr Carlos PIMENTA (PPE, P) on environmental, health and consumer protection aspects of world trade, the European Parliament reiterated and reaffirmed its position with regard to trade and the environment as formulated in its previous resolutions since January 1993. It called once again for the work of the Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) to be reinvigorated as regards Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), Ecolabelling, Non-product-related Process and Production Methods (PPMs), Transparency and Domestically Prohibited Goods, and for the agreements on environmental aspects of Trade Related Intellectual Property and Services to begin in earnest so that the Committee could truly fulfil its mandate before the year 2000. The CTE should in particular be mandated to explore solutions for the full integration into the WTO's system of fundamental principles relating to the environment, public health, cultural and ethical diversity and values and animal welfare. Parliament called for the precautionary principle to be explicitly established as the primary basis for decisions which have a bearing on public health and consumer protection. It urged the Member States to seek a binding Declaration to give political momentum to this process. This was vital to the credibility of the WTO's policy in the eyes of public opinion. Parliament added that, in the event of failure, it would reconsider its posture towards the WTO. It called on the Commission to advocate at the WTO ministerial conference in Geneva (May 1998) that the WTO should draw up an Understanding concerning the application of the principle of 'like products' enabling otherwise similar products to be differentiated where their production or processing had different impacts on the environment. It renewed its request for a Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development to be set up within the WTO in parallel to, or as a special meeting of, its General Council. It instructed its President to enter into a dialogue with the Director-General of the WTO to work out formal arrangements as to how Parliament should be kept informed about all the ongoing work of the WTO across the whole range of its activities.?