

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2005/2247(INI)	Procedure completed
Assessment of the Doha Round following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong		
Subject 6.20.01 Agreements and relations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	INTA International Trade		13/06/2005
		PPE-DE PAPASTAMKOS Georgios	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	DEVE Development		01/12/2005
		PPE-DE MARTENS Maria	
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs		13/12/2005
		ALDE STARKEVIČIŪTĖ Margarita	
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		13/12/2005
		PPE-DE RÜBIG Paul	
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		23/11/2005
		PPE-DE DAUL Joseph	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Agriculture and Fisheries	2708	20/02/2006
	General Affairs	2706	30/01/2006
	Agriculture and Fisheries	2702	20/12/2005
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Trade		

Key events			
15/12/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/12/2005	Debate in Council	2702	
30/01/2006	Debate in Council	2706	

20/02/2006	Debate in Council	2708	Summary
22/02/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
01/03/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0051/2006	
03/04/2006	Debate in Parliament		
04/04/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/04/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0123/2006	Summary
04/04/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2005/2247(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	INTA/6/32400

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE367.917	19/01/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE368.034	13/02/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	ECON	PE367.870	20/02/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE367.910	20/02/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE369.877	20/02/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE367.948	21/02/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0051/2006	01/03/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0123/2006	04/04/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)2095	11/05/2006	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)2311	30/06/2006	EC	

Assessment of the Doha Round following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong

Commissioner Fischer-Boel informed the Council on the latest state of play of the negotiations at the WTO. She insisted on the following issues:

- the European Communities must remain united on the WTO negotiations;
- bilateral meetings had been held in Geneva since the beginning of the year with certain WTO partners in order to seek for common ground on sensitive products and to build up alliances;
- the offensive interests of the Community in Agriculture remain domestic supports and export refunds; she agreed with the Netherlands delegation to discuss the phasing out of the export refunds on their overall budgetary value rather than on their volume;
- the Commission will not table any new offer on agriculture following the last offer issued on 28 October 2005; she made clear in reference to

remarks raised by the French delegation, that this offer was within the mandate granted by the Council to the Commission for the negotiations at the WTO, and that Geographical Indications were still being discussed; in response to a question raised by the Polish delegation, she also stated that the special safeguard clause was not to be given up;

- the importance of pursuing non-trade concerns, including those on Geographical Indications;

- despite a complicated schedule, the principle remained that "nothing could be agreed until everything is agreed";

- the Commissioner undertook to keep the Council fully informed of the state of play on WTO negotiations and to report to the next Council meeting on 20th March in the light of the planned G6 Ministerial meeting to be held in London in the beginning of March.

The Presidency repeated its intention to keep this issue on the agenda of forthcoming Council meetings.

Assessment of the Doha Round following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Giorgios PAPASTAMKOS (EPP-ED, EL) on the assessment of the Doha Round following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong.

Deploping the slow progress in the negotiations so far and the "predetermined low level of ambition" for the outcome of the Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, MEPs called for a greater commitment of all major players, including the EU, the US and the emerging economies. Industrialised countries and advanced developing countries should engage constructively in real negotiations to reach a successful conclusion. The report said that "the target of 2006 for the conclusion of the Round simply must not be missed". And it stressed that a successful conclusion of the negotiations must contribute to achieving the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

On agriculture, the committee said that the commitments made by the Commission during the negotiations at the WTO must not go beyond the bounds of the current CAP arrangements or the negotiating mandate. It recalled the scope of the Luxembourg agreement on CAP reform and insisted on the need to define "green box" measures, including decoupled support. MEPs also deplored the absence of progress on the establishment of a register for wines and spirits as well as on the extension of geographical indications to other products. The report asked the Commission to consider the possibility of introducing a "development box" for the Least Developed Countries into the agricultural negotiations, so that they can tackle food safety and rural employment - major issues when it comes to eradicating poverty.

The committee said that negotiations on non-agricultural market access should lead to ambitious and balanced results, guaranteeing new real market access opportunities. Given the lack of progress in the services area, the report called for the intensification of negotiations at both bilateral and multilateral levels, with due regard for the interests of weak and vulnerable economies. It reiterated that essential public services, such as health, education and audiovisual services, should be excluded from liberalisation. However, it insisted that the EU should continue emphasising the liberalisation of services and the opening of markets, especially in the finance, tourist and distribution sectors, which are important for the European economy.

MEPs also called for strengthened discipline with regard to anti-dumping and other rules issues in order to prevent abusive recourse to trade defence instruments while preserving the legitimate use and effectiveness of these instruments. Among other points, the report called on the EU negotiators within the WTO to start formulating an EU position on energy that introduces greater security of supply and stronger market forces in this field. Lastly, it called for institutional reform to improve the functioning of the WTO and reiterated the importance of a parliamentary dimension for the WTO to enhance its democratic legitimacy and transparency, given that members of Parliament can constitute an important link with citizens.

Assessment of the Doha Round following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong

The European Parliament adopted the own-initiative report by Giorgios PAPASTAMKOS (EPP-ED, EL) on the assessment of the Doha Round following the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong. The non-binding report was adopted by 493 votes in favour to 103 against with 25 abstentions. (Please refer to the summary dated 22/02/2006).

Furthermore, it should be added that the Parliament highlighted the important offer made by the EU to abolish its export refund system by 2013 and insisted that a parallel move by other WTO members was required in the areas of export credits, State trading enterprises and food aid. It emphasised that 2013 is an end-date for this process and calls for a frontloading of a substantial part of the cuts in the first half of the implementation period.

In addition, the importance of encouraging public and political support for the WTO multilateral trading system has been stressed. Parliament notes that companies have a legitimate interest in shaping policies that affect how they do business and that the participation of different groups, including NGOs, is crucial to the WTO's functioning. It stresses, however, that corporate and NGO priorities disproportionately influence the WTO's policy agenda and could play a bigger role than democratically elected parliamentarians with regard to the final document. The Commission is urged to carefully examine the role of companies and NGOs in the negotiation process and there is a need for increased transparency and the reduction of corporate and NGO privileges. Equally, Parliament stresses that better information of the public and wider consultation of civil society are needed and it reiterates, in this respect, the important contribution the parliamentary dimension can make as a means of strengthening the WTO's democratic accountability and openness to the citizens.

The importance of the work of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO in strengthening the democratic dimension of the WTO is also stressed. Parliament notes, however, the lack of consideration given to its Final Declarations by WTO negotiators. It acknowledges the effort made by EU negotiators to address the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO but deplores the lack of engagement of other WTO negotiators.

Lastly, the importance of Parliament being represented at all WTO meetings at which major steps in the negotiations are taken and where ministers are involved and not only on the occasion of official Ministerial Conferences is stressed. Parliament requests, therefore, that a small delegation of MEPs be meaningfully involved in the meetings to be convened in Geneva with a view to meeting the 30 April and 31 July 2006 deadlines set in the Hong Kong Declaration. The Council is invited to extend an invitation to such a delegation of MEPs to participate, as

observers, in at least one of the meetings of the 133 Committee to be organised in Geneva at the end of April 2006. The Commission is called upon to support this initiative and to ensure that members of the Parliament receive appropriate information on the progress of negotiations during their stay in Geneva.