

Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2031(INI)
Trade and poverty: designing trade policies to maximise trade's contribution to poverty relief	
Subject 3.45.05 Business policy, e-commerce, after-sales service, commercial distribution 4.10.05 Social inclusion, poverty, minimum income	
Procedure completed	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	INTA International Trade		
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	DEVE Development		25/01/2006
		ALDE BUDREIKAITĖ Danutė	
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality		21/02/2006
		PPE-DE ZÁBORSKÁ Anna	
European Commission	Commission DG Trade	Commissioner	

Key events			
16/02/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/05/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
11/05/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0179/2006	
31/05/2006	Debate in Parliament		
01/06/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
01/06/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0242/2006	Summary
01/06/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2031(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/6/32404

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE367.908	02/02/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE370.311	17/03/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE370.215	05/04/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE371.811	20/04/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0179/2006	11/05/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0242/2006	01/06/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)2902	22/06/2006	EC	

Trade and poverty: designing trade policies to maximise trade's contribution to poverty relief

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Helmut MARKOV (GUE/NGL, DE) on designing trade policies to maximise the contribution of trade to poverty relief. The report stressed that trade could help to create opportunities for poverty reduction in developing countries, but only if it was accompanied by "good-quality domestic policies" as well as suitable international policies. And it affirmed that the attainment of all eight UN Millennium Development Goals should be regarded as the "overriding task" in the current negotiations on the world trade system and the Economic Partnership Agreements. This, it said, would require a trade environment in which developing countries "have real access to the markets of developed countries, more equitable trade practices, strong and enforced rules of protection on the environment and social rights and the effective relief of unsustainable debt".

The report drew attention to the need for a differentiated approach to poor countries, pointing out that the term 'developing countries' encompassed "a disparate group of States whose socio-economic situation, production structures and export capacity differ substantially". MEPs therefore welcomed the willingness expressed by Trade Commissioner Mandelson in his statement of 9 February 2006 in Mauritius to adopt "a differentiated approach to poor countries based on their level of development and to maintain a tariff preferences system that takes account of these disparities". They called on the Commission to argue within the WTO for the introduction of several separate coefficients so as to calculate reductions in customs duties in accordance with the situation of the group of countries concerned.

The committee noted that, in a highly liberalised trade environment, the more fragile countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, were losing out to the emerging powers. It warned against over-hasty and forced opening of the market, which could have "catastrophic consequences", and stressed the right of those countries to determine for themselves the speed at which they open their markets in all sectors. It also pointed out the importance of creating regional markets.

MEPs noted that agriculture was still the principal source of income and employment in most developing countries, especially for the poorest. They therefore welcomed the EU's offer to abolish its export subsidies by 2013 and urged other WTO members to do the same. They also stressed the importance of commodities such as sugar, bananas and cotton for developing countries and reiterated the urgent need for stabilisation of commodity prices which were currently subject to substantial fluctuations.

In other recommendations, the committee urged the EU to engage in further initiatives concerning Corporate Social Responsibility, to increase technical assistance to the developing countries, and to review the gender impact of European trade agreements and trade policies to ensure that women are able to share fully in the economic life of the developing countries. The report also called for a full impact assessment of current trade policies on the environment, sensitive sectors such as forestry and fisheries, and poverty in both the developing countries and the EU. Lastly, MEPs reiterated Parliament's call for a wide-ranging urgent reform of the WTO "resulting in greater democratic accountability, transparency and higher credibility so as to integrate it more effectively within the general framework of world governance".

Trade and poverty: designing trade policies to maximise trade's contribution to poverty relief

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Helmut MARKOV (GUE/NGL, DE) on designing trade policies to maximise the contribution of trade to poverty relief. (Please see the summary of 03/05/2006/)