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ABBOZZ TA' RAPPORT

dwar ir-rizultati tal-Konferenza Ministerjali f'Hong Kong
(2005/2247(INI))

Kumitat għall-Kummerċ Internazzjonali

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dwar ir-riżultati tal-Konferenza Ministerjali f'Hong Kong (2005/2247(INI))

Il-Parlament Ewropew,

- wara li kkunsidra d-Dikjarazzjoni Ministerjali tas-Sitt Sessjoni tal-Konferenza Ministerjali ta' l-Organizzazzjoni Dinjija tal-Kummerċ (WTO), adottata fit-18 ta' Diċembru 2005¹,
- wara li kkunsidra d-Dikjarazzjonijiet Finali mill-Konferenza Parlamentari tad-WTO ta' bejn it-12 u l-15 ta' Diċembru 2005, u ta' bejn il-25 u s-26 ta' Novembru 2004.
- wara li kkunsidra r-riżoluzzjoni ta' l-1 ta' Diċembru 2005 dwar it-tnejn għas-Sitt Konferenza Ministerjali tad-WTO f'Hong Kong²,
- wara li kkunsidra l-konklużjonijiet tal-Kunsill dwar l-Aġenda ta' l-Iżvilupp ta' Doha tad-WTO, sussegwenti għal-laqgħa straordinarja tal-Kunsill għar-Relazzjonijiet Esterni fil-Lussemburgu fit-18 ta' Ottubru 2005 (13378/05),
- wara li kkunsidra r-riżoluzzjoni tiegħu tat-12 ta' Mejju 2005 dwar l-evalwazzjoni tad-Doha Round wara d-Deċiżjoni tal-Kunsill Ġenerali tad-WTO ta' l-1 ta' Awissu 2004³,
- wara li kkunsidra d-Deċiżjoni tal-Kunsill Ġenerali tad-WTO ta' l-1 ta' Awissu 2004⁴,
- wara li kkunsidra d-Dikjarazzjoni Ministerjali ta' Doha tad-WTO ta' l-14 ta' Novembru 2001⁵,
- wara li kkunsidra r-riżoluzzjonijiet preċedenti tiegħu tal-15 ta' Diċembru 1999 dwar it-Tielet Konferenza Ministerjali tad-WTO f'Seattle⁶, tat-13 ta' Diċembru 2001 dwar il-laqgħa tad-WTO fil-Qatar⁷, u tal-25 ta' Settembru 2003 dwar il-Hames Konferenza Ministerjali tad-WTO f'Cancún⁸,
- wara li kkunsidra r-Rapport ta' Sutherland dwar "Il-Futur tad-WTO: Kif se jiġu indirizzati l-isfidi istituzzjonali fil-Millennju l-ġdid"⁹,
- wara li kkunsidra r-riżoluzzjoni tad-9 ta' Marzu 2005 dwar il-proposta għal regolament tal-Kunsill li jhaddem skema ta' tariffi ġeneralizzati ta' preferenza¹⁰,
- wara li kkunsidra l-Artikolu 45 tar-Regoli ta' Proċedura tiegħu,
- wara li kkunsidra r-rapport tal-Kumitat għall-Kummerċ Internazzjonali u l-opinjoni tal-Kumitat għall-Iżvilupp Reġjonali, il-Kumitat għall-Biedja u l-Iżvilupp Rurali, Kumitat għall-Industrija, ir-Riċerka u l-Enerġija u l-Kumitat għall-Affarijiet Ekonomiċi u Monetari (A6-0000/2006),

¹ Numru tad-dokument 05-6248, simbolu tad-dokument WT/MIN(05)/DEC)

² Testi Adottati, 1.12.2005, P6_TA(2005)0461.

³ Testi Adottati, 12.5.2005, P6_TA(2005)0182.

⁴ Numru tad-Dokument 04-3297, simbolu tad-dokument WT/L/579)

⁵ Numru tad-dokument 01-5859, simbolu tad-dokument WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1)

⁶ ĠU C 296, 18.10.2000, p. 121.

⁷ ĠU C 177 E, 25.7.2002, p. 290.

⁸ ĠU C 77 E, 26.3.2004, p. 393.

⁹ Rapport mill-Bord konsultattiv għad-Direttur Ġenerali Supachai Panitchpakdi, WTO, Diċembru 2004.

¹⁰ Testi Adottati, 9.3.2005, P6_TA-PROV(2005)0066.

- A. billi s-sistema tal-kummerċ multilaterali inkorporata fid-WTO tikkontribwixxi għal aktar sigurtà, trasparenza u stabbiltà fil-kummerċ internazzjonali u għall-immaniġġar aħjar tal-globalizzazzjoni bis-saħħa ta' regolamenti u dixxiplini multilaterali u l-ftehim gudizzjarju ta' tilwim,
- B. billi tmiem b'suċċess tad-Doha Round, li jipprovdi għal aktar liberalizzazzjoni ġenwina tal-kummerċ u regolamenti multilaterali aktar b'saħħithom, jista' jkun parametru importanti sabiex jiġu stimolati t-tkabbir ekonomiku, l-iżvilupp u l-impjiegi dinjija u sabiex b'mod effettiv jikkontribwixxi għall-integrazzjoni fl-ekonomija dinjija ta' pajjiżi li għadhom qed jiżviluppaw,
- C. billi l-UE dejjem hadet sehem ewlieni fin-negozjati mindu tnedja d-Doha Round, u dejjem issottomettiet offerti kredibbli u sostanzjali fl-oqsma kollha tan-negozjati, inkluż l-agrikoltura, waqt li pajjiżi oħrajn żviluppaw jew pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw b'rata avvanzata, ma wrewx l-istess flessibilità u livell ta' impenn,
- D. billi l-isforzi sabiex tinzamm l-iskadenza ta' l-2006 bħala żmien sa meta jrid jintemm id-Doha Round m'għandhomx jikkompromettu l-għan li jintlaħaq eżitu ambizzjuż u bilanċjat,
- E. billi d-Doha Round għandu jwassal għal eżiti favur l-iżvilupp fl-oqsma kollha tan-negozjati, speċjalment fl-interessi tal-pajjiżi l-anqas żviluppaw (LDCs),
- F. billi data tat-tmiem għall-eliminazzjoni ta' sussidji għall-esportazzjoni agrikola giet miftiehma; billi ma ntlahaq l-ebda progress komparabbli fl-oqsma ta' appoġġ domestiku u aċċess għas-suq,
- G. billi n-NAMA għandu potenzjal ta' gwadann kummerċjali sinifikanti għall-UE, iżda daqstant għal pajjiżi li għadhom qegħdin jiżviluppaw peress li parti konsiderevoli tal-kummerċ tagħhom huwa fi prodotti industrijali u jridu jhabbtuha ma' ostakli tariffarji għolja fil-kummerċ ma' pajjiżi oħrajn li qegħdin jiżviluppaw,
- H. billi fil-qasam tas-servizzi l-metodu attwali ta' negozjar ma tax riżultati sodisfaċenti; billi l-għan li qed tfittex li tilhaq l-UE huwa li ġenwinament titkattar il-liberalizzazzjoni, filwaqt li tippreserva l-għanijiet politiċi nazzjonali tal-membri tad-WTO, u d-dritt tagħhom li jirregolaw s-servizzi pubbliċi,
- I. billi titjib fir-regolamenti tad-WTO li jirrigwardaw il-facilitazzjoni tal-kummerċ, l-'anti-dumping', u aspetti oħra jkun ta' vantaġġ għall-membri kollha tad-WTO billi jtejjeb is-sigurtà legali, inaqqas l-ispiza ta' tranżazzjonijiet kummerċjali u billi jimpedixxi l-użu abuziv jew protezzjonista,
- J. billi l-proċess ta' globalizzazzjoni u l-irwol tad-WTO ta' spiss huma interpretati jew mifhuma ħazin, u billi hemm bżonn ta' responsabbiltà u trasparenza akbar fid-WTO,
- 1. Itenni l-impenn tiegħu favur il-multilateralizmu fil-politika kummerċjali, u l-appoġġ tiegħu għad-WTO bħala l-forum ewlieni li jikkontrolla l-globalizzazzjoni; juri li l-falliment tan-negozjati multilaterali u bidla lejn ftehimiet bilaterali jew reġjonali, iwasslu

għal proċess tal-liberalizzazzjoni u żvilupp mhux ugwali li għaldaqstant ikunu ta' detriment l-aktar għall-pajjiżi li għadhom qed jiżviluppaw;

2. Jilmenta dwar il-progress bil-mod li s'issa kien hemm fin-negozjati u dwar il-livell baxx ta' ambizzjoni predeterminat għall-eżitu tal-Konferenza Ministerjali f'Hong Kong; madankollu jesprimi s-sodisfazzjoni tiegħu li, ta' l-anqas, id-Dikjarazzjoni Ministerjali twitti t-triq għal aktar negozjati fl-oqsma prinċipali;
3. Jinsisti li l-oqsma prinċipali kollha tan-negozjati għandhom jiġu ttrattati b'mod parallel, b'konformità ma' l-idea ta' l-Impenn Waħdieni (Single Undertaking) u bl-istess livell għoli ta' ambizzjoni;
4. Itenni l-bżonn li jiġi rrispettat il-karattru multifunzjonali fi ħdan l-UE;
5. Ifakkar li, minhabba r-riforma fil-CAP ta' l-2003, l-UE naqqset sostanzjalment l-appoġġ domestiku tagħha li jgħawweġ l-kummerċ;
6. Jenfasizza l-offerta importanti magħmula mill-UE biex telimina s-sistema tagħha ta' rifuzjoni fuq l-esportazzjoni sa l-2013 u tišhaq li mossa parallela minn membri oħra tad-WTO hija meħtieġa fl-oqsma tal-krediti fuq l-esportazzjoni, intrapriżi kummerċjali ta' l-Istat u għajnuna ta' ikel;
7. Jiddikjara, li fejn għandu x'jaqsam l-aċċess għas-suq, ammont limitat ta' flessibilità huwa meħtieġ permezz ta' formula għat-tnaqqis tat-tariffi u d-deskrizzjoni ta' prodotti sensitivi; jirreferi għall-possibilità ta' l-awto-deskrizzjoni ta' prodotti speċjali minn pajjiżi li għadhom qed jiżviluppaw; jilqa', f'dar-rigward, l-istipulazzjoni ta' sett komuni ta' indikaturi speċifiċi;
8. Jilqa' l-ftehma dwar l-eliminazzjoni tas-sussidji fuq l-esportazzjoni tal-qoton sa l-2006 u l-provvediment ta' aċċess hieles minn dazju u minn kwoti għall-pajjiżi l-anqas żviluppati; iżda juri dispjaċir għan-nuqqas ta' progress fil-qasam ta' sussidji domestiċi;
9. Jilmenta dwar in-nuqqas ta' progress f'dak li huwa t-twaqqif ta' registru għall-inbejjed u l-ispirti kif ukoll f'dak li huwa it-twessigħ tal-protezzjoni ta' indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi biex din tkopri prodotti oħra; ifakkar li dawn l-elementi huma essenzjali għal eżitu bilanċjat tan-negozjati;
10. Jappella għal riżultati ambizzjużi fin-negozjati dwar in-NAMA, li jiggarrantixxu opportunitajiet ġodda ta' aċċess għas-suq, anke fil-kummerċ bejn il-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw (South-South), billi jkun hemm tnaqqis sostanzjali fir-rati applikati; jappella lill-pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw b'rata avvanzata sabiex jerfgħu s-sehem tagħhom tar-responsabilità, filwaqt li jiddikjara li l-eżitu għandu jirrifletti l-prinċipju miftiehem ta' reċiproċità li hija anqas minn dik totali;
11. Jilqa' l-ftehma li tintuża l-formula Żvizzera għat-tnaqqis tat-tariffi; madankollu jenfasizza li l-effett armonizzanti ta' formula ta' dan it-tip m'għandux jiddgħajjef minhabba d-definizzjoni ta' koefċjenti multipli; jiffavorixxi l-attività ta' inizjattivi settorjali f'setturi ta' interess għall-esportazzjoni għall-UE;

12. Jinnota li huwa ta' importanza strateġika li l-partijiet kollha fil-kummerċ inehhu l-ostakli kollha mhux tariffarji li mhumiex ġustifikati;
13. Jilmenta dwar in-nuqqas ta' progress fil-qasam tas-servizzi u jappella għall-intensifikazzjoni tan-negozjati, filwaqt li jingħata kas ta' l-interessi ta' ekonomiji dgħajfin u vulnerabbli; juri dispjaċir għall-fatt li d-Dikjarazzjoni Finali ma tfassalx miri kwantitattivi għas-sottomissjoni ta' offerti reveduti; itenni li s-saħħa, l-edukazzjoni u s-servizzi awdjoviżivi għandhom ikunu esklużi mil-liberalizzazzjoni;
14. Itenni li konklużjoni b'suċċess tan-negozjati għandha twassal għal impenn favur benefiċċji ta' żvilupp konkreti fl-oqsma kollha tan-negozjati, l-aktar fl-interess tal-pajjiżi l-anqas żviluppati, u għandha tikkontribwixxi biex jintlaħqu l-Għanijiet għall-Iżvilupp tal-Millennju;
15. Jilqa' l-ftehma li tikkonċerna l-provvediment ta' aċċess hieles minn dazju u minn kwoti għall-pajjiżi l-anqas żviluppati; madankollu juri dispjaċir għall-fatt li nżammet miftuħa l-possibilità li jinżammu restrizzjonijiet fuq prodotti ta' importanza ewlenija għall-pajjiżi l-anqas żviluppati u li dan l-impenn mhuwiex obligatorju għall-pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw b'rata avvanzata; jappella għall-pajjiżi żviluppati kollha u għal dawk il-pajjiżi li qed jiżviluppaw b'rata avvanzata biex isegwu l-mudell ta' l-inizjattiva "kollox hliet armi" ta' l-UE;
16. Jikkunsidra li, filwaqt li t-trattament speċjali u differenzjali għandu jifforma parti integrali tal-ftehimiet tad-WTO, aktar ftuħ progressiv tas-swieq bejn il-pajjiżi li qegħdin jiżviluppaw (South-South) u impenn favur regolamenti multilaterali aktar b'saħħithom għandhom ikunu ta' ġid għall-iżvilupp ekonomiku u għall-integrazzjoni fl-ekonomija dinjija ta' pajjiżi li għadhom qed jiżviluppaw;
17. Jenfasizza l-importanza ta' assistenza teknika xierqa biex pajjiżi li għadhom qed jiżviluppaw jiġu megħjuna jżommu ma' l-obbligi godda, jadattaw ruħhom għar-riformi, u b'mod effettiv jimplementaw ir-regolamenti tad-WTO; jenfasizza wkoll il-htieġa ta' inkuraġġiment lill-ekonomiji dgħajfa u vulnerabbli sabiex jintegraw il-kummerċ fil-politiki ta' żvilupp nazzjonali u fl-istrateġiji ta' tnaqqis tal-faqar tagħhom; jappoġġja l-espansjoni tal-kunċett fejn għajjnuna tingħata lil pajjiżi li għadhom qed jiżviluppaw biex tpatti għall-isforzi tagħhom favur il-kummerċ ('Aid for Trade'), bil-għan li jissahħu l-kapaċitajiet kummerċjali u ta' esportazzjoni tagħhom, jiġu ddiversifikati l-bażijiet ta' produzzjoni, u jiġu sostitwiti r-rizorsi ta' dħul mid-dwana minn rizorsi fiskali oħrajn.
18. Jilqa' l-progress milhuq s'issa fin-negozjati dwar it-Thaffif tal-Kummerċ; jappella għat-twaqqif ta' impenji multilaterali favur aktar ċertezza legali, u s-simplifikazzjoni u l-immodernizzazzjoni ta' proċeduri kummerċjali; jenfasizza l-importanza partikulari f'dal-qasam ta' assistenza teknika mmirata;
19. Jenfasizza l-importanza li jiġi mhegġeġ l-appoġġ pubbliku u politiku għas-sistema ta' kummerċ multilaterali tad-WTO; jenfasizza li jinhtieġ li l-pubbliku ikun aktar infurmat u li s-soċjetà ċivili tkun aktar ikkonsultata; itenni f'dan ir-rigward, il-kontribut importanti li d-dimensjoni parlamentari tista' tagħti bhala mezz biex tissahħah ir-responsabilità demokratika tagħha u t-trasparenza tagħha għaċ-ċittadini;

20. Jiddikjara li huwa lest li jikkontribwixxi b'mod pożittiv għall-proċess ta' negozjati permezz tad-diversi kuntatti li l-Membri tiegħu għandhom mal-membri parlamentari ta' pajjiżi li magħhom l-UE għandha interessi komuni;
21. Ifakkar f'kemm hu importanti li l-Parlament Ewropew ikun infurmat u kkonsultat mill-Kummissjoni dwar l-istrategija ta' l-UE wara l-Konferenza ta' Hong Kong u dwar il-progress tan-negozjati;
22. Jagħti istruzzjonijiet lill-President tiegħu sabiex jgħaddi din ir-riżoluzzjoni lill-Kunsill u lill-Kummissjoni, u lill-parlamenti ta' l-Istati Membri, lill-pajjiżi ta' l-adeżjoni u lill-pajjiżi kandidati, lid-Direttur Ġenerali tad-WTO u lill-President ta' l-Unjoni Interparlamentari .

NOTA SPJEGATTIVA

Ηράκλειτος [έφη] "το αντίξουν συμφέρον και εκ των διαφερόντων καλλίστην αρμονίαν και πάντα κατ' έριν γίνεσθαι"

Αριστοτέλης, Ηθικά Νικομάχεια, Θ2.1155 β 5

Heracleitus [said] that "it is what opposes that helps and from different tones comes the fairest tune and all things are produced through strife"

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book 8I

1. The Hong Kong Ministerial Conference: limited expectations - modest results

The aim of this own-initiative report is to provide an assessment of the Doha Round following the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong (13-18 December 2005).

The current round of multilateral trade negotiations has been going on since November 2001 and, given the collective ambition to conclude this round before the end of 2006, it has now entered its final phase.

The previous phases of the negotiations - from Doha to Hong Kong via Cancún and Geneva - have revealed wide differences in the expectations, approaches and strategies of the main participants, and highlighted the difficulties involved in trying to reach an ambitious and balanced outcome covering all negotiating areas. As a result, progress has often proven elusive, many intermediate deadlines have been missed and negotiations have not been brought as much forward as one could have hoped and expected.

Because of the complete failure of the 5th Ministerial Conference in Cancún in September 2003 and the sketchy character of the Framework adopted by the WTO General Council in August 2004, the initial objective of the Hong Kong meeting was to consolidate the latter and to achieve a breakthrough by defining modalities in a number of key negotiating areas, such as agriculture, non-agricultural market access and services, and to agree on a significant development package, while encouraging progress in other chapters of the negotiations. Due to a persistent stalemate on the key issue of agricultural market access and a lack of flexibility on the part of other major players, however, the level of ambition for this event had to be eventually scaled down and it became clear, even before the Ministerial Conference started, that only modest results could be achieved.

Parliamentary monitoring of the Hong Kong negotiations - the European Parliament being represented in Hong Kong by a delegation of MEPs - led to the adoption of a joint declaration by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament on 15 December 2005.

Although this contribution was undoubtedly positive, the current arrangements still fall short, in qualitative terms, of a proper forum to ensure WTO democratic accountability and openness. The European Parliament delegation was assisted by the information provided by the Commission and the United Kingdom Presidency regarding the EU negotiating strategy and the general progress achieved in the negotiations before and during the Hong Kong Conference.

The present report comments upon the limited results achieved in Hong Kong. It also draws

attention to the considerable work that remains to be done, contains a message of support to the EU negotiators and is intended to focus attention in view of the next phases of the negotiations.

2. Results of the Conference by Subject

This section is based on the text of the Ministerial Declaration, with special reference to EU negotiating positions.

2.1 Agriculture

The question of agricultural products was designated by a number of developing and developed countries as crucial to the negotiations as a whole, placing the EU and the US in particular on the defensive. It was therefore necessary to break this deadlock if negotiations in other areas were to make any progress. The Hong Kong Conference made a valuable contribution on certain aspects of this dossier as indicated below:

- Agreement was reached on the definitive elimination of all forms of export subsidies by 2013, the year in which current CAP arrangements are due to end. In order to ensure parallelism between export refunds and other forms of export subsidies, such as export credits, exporting state trading enterprises and food aid, however, this date will only be confirmed upon completion of appropriate disciplines on these practices. Other issues, such as the substantial subsidy cuts to be made before 2013, also remain to be settled.
- Regarding domestic support, there was agreement on the fixing of three bands for reductions and on greater linear cuts in the higher levels of support (higher bands). There also appears to be some convergence concerning cuts to be made in Final Bound Total Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS), the overall cut in trade-distorting domestic support, and the *de minimis* limits. A review of the Green Box criteria was also agreed.
- On the difficult issue of market access, i.e. the reduction of agricultural tariffs, no substantive progress was made. There appears to be agreement on the adoption of four bands for structuring tariff cuts, but not on the limits of those bands, the magnitude of the cuts, and other issues such as the selection and special treatment of sensitive products, the operation of the Special Safeguard Mechanism, etc.
- Reference was made to the continuation of work in relation to geographical indications (establishment of a register for wines and spirits and extension of GI protection to other products), but no progress has been recorded on this issue of crucial importance for the EU.
- On the specific subject of cotton, it was agreed that export subsidies would be eliminated by developed countries in 2006, and that these countries would give duty and quota free access for cotton exports from LDCs from the commencement of the implementation period. However, no progress was made on the important issue of domestic support.

2.2 Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA)

The limited progress made in the agricultural negotiations helped to satisfy, to a certain extent, the demand of the EU and other developed countries for the acceptance of a

progressive reduction in tariffs, leading to the adoption of a 'Swiss Formula' for the elimination or reduction of tariffs. There was also agreement on special treatment for developing countries, including asymmetrical reciprocity arrangements regarding tariff reductions.

While acceptance of the Swiss Formula is a particularly significant development, difficult decisions will have to be reached by 30 April 2006 regarding the magnitude of the tariff reductions (through the adoption of coefficients) and the establishment of base rates for commencing such reductions. The Declaration also encourages members to submit proposals aimed at addressing the issue of non-tariff barriers (NTBs).

2.3 Services

On the subject of services, reference was simply made to progress achieved from the establishment of the GATS to the agreement of August 2004. A statement was also issued by members concerning the intensification of the relevant negotiations in accordance with Annex C to the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration. The Conference failed to make any substantial headway regarding the further liberalisation of international trade in services, which means that spectacular progress must now be made, both on a plurilateral and bilateral basis, if the objectives of the Doha Round are to be achieved. For the EU, progress in this sector is of vital importance to the development of its economy and to employment.

2.4 Trade and Development

Regarding support for developing countries and their smoother integration into the global economy, a number of decisions were taken, such as:

- The abolition, by 2008 or no later than the start of the implementation period, of tariff and quantitative restrictions for exports from the LDCs. However, this concession will only be given by developed countries and developing countries "declaring themselves in a position to do so" and restrictions may be maintained for up to 3 percent of tariff lines. The Ministerial Declaration also refers to measures to facilitate transactions and simplify rules of origin, increase technical support, encourage the creation of institutions, etc.
- The more active involvement of the WTO in efforts by international organisations and individual countries to implement 'Aid for Trade' arrangements enabling the LDCs to reinforce their production and export capacity and requisite commercial infrastructure.
- The reappraisal and further enhancement of the WTO's strategy for the provision of Technical Assistance and Training Plans to developing countries.

2.5 Other Business

On all other matters (e.g. WTO rules, Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), environment, trade facilitation, implementation of existing agreements, small economies, trade and transfer of technology, e-commerce, cooperation with other international organisations, etc.), the Hong Kong Conference did not, essentially, add anything new, but merely reconfirmed the *acquis* and called on participating members to continue and step up the negotiations.

3. Overall Assessment

Considered as a whole, the outcome of the Hong Kong Conference may, under the circumstances, be regarded as positive, although the actual results were modest, given the absence of any creative breakthroughs on many crucial issues. A package of development measures was agreed upon and, even more importantly, members reiterated their commitment to a successful conclusion of the round by the end of 2006 and set a number of intermediate deadlines to achieve this objective.

The EU once again made a major contribution to this positive result by accepting a conditional commitment to 2013 as the end-date for the elimination of export subsidies. It is not clear, however, that much has been obtained in return for this concession, whether in other chapters of the agriculture negotiations or in other key areas.

Major advanced developing countries continue to reject the EU proposal on agricultural market access, despite the considerable sacrifices this proposal entails for our rural communities, and they have thus far refused to make any meaningful concessions in NAMA and services. This attitude is all the more worrying if one considers that these countries are those which maintain the highest levels of protection and hold the key to the development of poorer countries through the promotion of South-South trade.

Although development concerns should and will continue to remain at the heart of these negotiations, they should not be confused with the single-sided advancement of the interests of large agricultural exporters nor be allowed to serve as a cover for protectionism.

The EU has, along the different phases of the negotiations, exercised leadership in the adoption of measures in favour of the poorest members, such as those concerning access to medicines, duty-free quota-free access to markets for LDCs and cotton. Although other members have also accepted commitments on these issues before and during the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, these commitments are not as far reaching (duty-free quota-free access, cotton) or at the same advanced stage of implementation (access to medicines) as in the case of the EU.

The EU has also, alongside other developed country members, launched the idea of a "round for free" in favour of the poorest members which, as a result of all these initiatives, stand to obtain a lot, including in the form of increased aid for trade, and are expected to give little.

Further unilateral EU concessions in agriculture at this stage would clearly jeopardise the implementation of our reformed CAP and be of no or little benefit to those countries for which the development agenda has been designed.

It is time therefore that the attention of negotiators start shifting to other important areas of the negotiations, such as NAMA, services, but also trade facilitation and rules issues, with a view to defining modalities and disciplines which really make a difference in international trade.

This would be in the interest of the EU, whose participation in the Doha Round should remain consistent with the objectives of enhanced growth, employment and competitiveness laid out in its Lisbon Strategy. It would also be in the interest of those many developing countries which enjoy actual or potential comparative advantages in industrial or services sectors and for which an "agriculture only" round would represent a major loss of opportunities.

4. Beyond Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Conference showed that the road to a successful conclusion of the current round remains open. However, this road is a bumpy one and may soon hit a dead end.

The political will seems to be there but positions still widely differ and the almost exclusive focus of the negotiations on agriculture thus far has not allowed the trade-offs across issues to materialise, which are so crucial at such an advanced stage.

Whether the very tight deadlines defined in Hong Kong can be met remains to be seen.

As WTO members engage into the last and most difficult phases of the negotiations, it would probably be useful to replace this whole process into a general perspective.

There should be an awareness on all sides that there is no viable alternative to the multilateral trading system when it comes to ensuring economic integration and development, the effective management of increased economic interdependency and the peaceful and fair settlement of disputes. The successful conclusion of the Doha Round would strengthen and widen international trade and development, making the international trading system fairer and more effective for the benefit of all members. Moreover, it would act as a barrier to the spread of protectionism. Likewise, in an age where demand for international institutions and for the management of world politics outstrips supply, the success of the Doha Round could provide a significant impetus to international cooperation and integration as a whole.

While there is some room in the WTO for considerations related to the development of the poor countries of the South, environmental protection and social responsibility, it should be borne in mind that the WTO is not purely a development body and much less an environment or social-policy organisation. It is in fact a specialised organisation with specific terms of reference regarding international trade. Overloading its agenda with matters beyond the confines of 'trade-related issues' and overemphasising them in the Doha Declaration has made the negotiations even more difficult. These difficulties tend to be exacerbated by a lack of democracy in the WTO's relations with civil society and insufficient efforts of communication and information.

Moreover, the direction taken by negotiations so far, set against the increasingly heterogeneous composition of the WTO, has shown that moves to regulate those areas of its members' domestic economic policies which have a trade-policy dimension meet with resistance, causing negotiations to become bogged down and resulting in persistent breakdowns in communication.

During the pre-Hong Kong negotiations, and at the conference itself, the EU has continued to promote a comprehensive vision of the Doha round, seeking at the same time a further liberalisation of international trade in goods and services and the strengthening of multilateral trade rules and disciplines, while encouraging and supporting the development efforts of the world's poorest countries. Thanks to the indefatigable efforts of the Commission's team of able negotiators, the unity of its Member States, and the support of the European Parliament, the EU was able to submit important, credible and constructive proposals on all the subjects covered by the Hong Kong negotiations. The EU will certainly continue its efforts during the months to come and should become even more actively involved in efforts to ensure the successful conclusion of the Round.

The EU's negotiating springboard and objective reference framework is provided by the regulatory *acquis* of its internal market. The cognitive projection of the European governance model – based on the characteristics of normative power – at the larger scale of world trade governance runs contrary to the less regulatory and less binding WTO system. The more

stable and comprehensive the WTO regulatory system becomes, the greater the resulting global convergence, and the closer the multilateral trading system will come to the European model of external action.