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P8_TA(2018)0230

Annual report on the implementation of the Common Commercial Policy

European Parliament resolution of 30 May 2018 on the Annual report on the implementation of the Common Commercial Policy (2017/2070(INI))

(2020/C 76/13)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Trade for All: Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy’,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2016 on a new forward-looking and innovative future strategy for trade and investment ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Commission report of 13 September 2017 on the implementation of the trade policy strategy ‘Trade for All’ (COM(2017)0491),
- having regard to the Commission report of 9 November 2017 on ‘Implementation of free trade agreements, 1 January 2016 - 31 December 2016’ (COM(2017)0654),
- having regard to the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’,
- having regard to the State of the Union address by the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, of 13 September 2017,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2017 on multilateral negotiations in view of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires, 10-13 December 2017 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2016 on implementation of the 2010 recommendations of Parliament on social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 February 2016 containing the European Parliament’s recommendations to the Commission on the negotiations for the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2017 on the impact of international trade and the EU’s trade policies on global value chains ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its position at first reading of 15 November 2017 with a view to the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2017/... of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2016/1036 on protection against dumped imports from countries not members of the European Union and Regulation (EU) 2016/1037 on protection against subsidised imports from countries not members of the European Union ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2017 ‘Towards a digital trade strategy’ ⁽⁷⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 101, 16.3.2018, p. 30.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0439.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 101, 16.3.2018, p. 19.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 35, 31.1.2018, p. 21.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0330.

⁽⁶⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0437.

⁽⁷⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0488.

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- having regard to its position at first reading of 16 March 2017 with a view to the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2017/... of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas ⁽⁸⁾,
 - having regard to its position at first reading of 4 October 2016 with a view to the adoption of Regulation (EU) 2016/... of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1236/2005 concerning trade in certain goods which could be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ⁽⁹⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on human rights and social and environmental standards in international trade agreements ⁽¹⁰⁾,
 - having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on international trade policy in the context of climate change imperatives ⁽¹¹⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 24 May 2006 entitled 'Promoting decent work for all: The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world' (COM(2006)0249, SEC(2006)0643),
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2017 on the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Korea ⁽¹²⁾,
 - having regard to Opinion 2/15 of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) of 16 May 2017 on the Union competence to sign and conclude the Free Trade Agreement with Singapore,
 - having regard to the Commission study of 15 November 2016 on the cumulative effects of future trade agreements on EU agriculture,
 - having regard to Articles 2 and 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
 - having regard to the Commission staff working document of 14 July 2015 entitled 'implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – State of Play' (SWD(2015)0144),
 - having regard to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), in particular Article 4(1) there prohibiting slavery and servitude,
 - having regard to Articles 207, 208 and 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on International Trade and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A8-0166/2018),
- A. whereas the Common Commercial Policy comprises a body of trade agreements and legislative measures to safeguard the Union's offensive and defensive trade interests, contribute to sustainable growth and decent job creation, ensure that EU rules and standards are observed, safeguard states' right to regulate and citizens' well-being, and promote EU values; and whereas adherence to these aims requires good orientation of Union trade policy and full and efficient implementation and monitoring thereof in a fairer and more transparent manner;

⁽⁸⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0090.

⁽⁹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0369.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 31.

⁽¹¹⁾ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 94.

⁽¹²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0225.

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- B. whereas the Union has committed itself to policy coherence for development in its 2017 European Consensus on Development, which seeks to bring about sustainable development and accelerate transformation by placing an emphasis on cross-cutting elements of development policy such as gender equality, youth, investment and trade, sustainable energy and climate action, good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and migration and mobility, in order to contribute with the entirety of its external policies, including the Common Commercial Policy, to the goals defined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- C. whereas the Union is committed to promoting decent work for all, as laid down in the 2005 United Nations World Summit Outcome and in the Ministerial Declaration of the United Nations Economic and Social Council High Level Segment 2006, including through its trade relations; whereas the European Council has repeatedly underlined the importance of strengthening the social dimension of globalisation and of taking it into account in various internal and external policies and in international cooperation;
- D. whereas the Union is the world's leading commercial power and the biggest single market in the world, and it is also the world's leading exporter of goods and services, sustaining 31 million jobs in Europe, 67 % more than in the mid-1990s;
- E. whereas the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is the only worldwide international organisation dealing with the global rules of trade between different economic areas or countries;
- F. whereas the implementation and enforcement phase is of crucial and fundamental importance in ensuring that Union trade policy is effective;
- G. whereas the Union's citizens are increasingly demanding that the Union's trade policy ensure that goods entering the EU market have been produced under decent and sustainable conditions;
- H. whereas European companies use the reductions in customs duty available under trade agreements for approximately 70 % of the exports that could potentially benefit from them, whereas the corresponding take-up rate among our trade partners is 90 %, and whereas it is essential that European companies should utilise these advantages to the full in order to boost employment, growth and investment;
- I. whereas SMEs help to drive the European economy, accounting for 30 % of the Union's exports and 90 % of employment in the EU, and whereas it is essential that they be fully involved in the implementation of EU trade policy, thus reinforcing its role in exportation, innovation and internationalisation;
- J. whereas the Union is the world's largest exporter of services and its trade surplus in the services sector has increased tenfold since 2000, exceeding EUR 120 billion in 2016;
- K. whereas the questions raised in public debate about the Common Commercial Policy and the way it is implemented need to be answered clearly and precisely;
- L. whereas the Common Commercial Policy, as suggested by the Trade for All strategy, is a value-based policy intended to promote, among other things, good governance, transparency, sustainable development and fair trade practices;
- M. whereas the Union's trade policy must be consistent with its other external and internal policies and in accordance with the principle of policy coherence for development to ensure transparency, stability and fairer conditions for competition, bearing in mind, among other things, the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;

The current context

1. Points out that the international context has changed profoundly since the Trade for All strategy was published and that new trade challenges and concrete tasks now need to be addressed; is concerned to see the rise of some protectionist practices that are incompatible with WTO rules, around the world and reiterates its support for an open, fair, balanced, sustainable, and rules-based trading system;

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2. Takes note of the growing economic importance of Asia and of the USA's gradual withdrawal on the trade front, generating uncertainty for trade internationally, as well as domestic criticisms of international trade policy and the demand for fair trade; calls on the Commission to adapt its trade policy to address these developments and to be more responsive and responsible, while at the same time establishing a longer-term strategy, given these changes in the international context; underlines that, in this changing global context, the role of the EU in promoting a value-based trade agenda is increasingly important to European citizens;

3. Highlights the growing importance of services, especially digital services, including the servicification of trade in goods (Mode 5), of data flow and of e-commerce in international trade; underscores the need to strengthen the international rules governing these sectors so as to secure real benefits for consumers, improve European companies' access to international markets, and safeguard the observance of fundamental rights throughout the world, including data protection and privacy; points out that the protection of personal data is non-negotiable in trade agreements, believes that the digital rights of citizens should be advanced through trade agreements and recalls its position on data protection and digital trade as expressed in its resolution 'Towards a digital trade strategy'; underlines that EU trade policy can play a significant role in bridging the digital divide; encourages the Commission to advance the digital trade agenda in ongoing and future Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations and at the WTO; calls for digital trade chapters to be included in all future trade agreements, including those currently under negotiation and recalls the importance of preventing unjustified data localisation requirements; asks the Commission to pursue a digital trade strategy that takes into account the opportunities it offers to small and medium-sized businesses by facilitating access to global markets;

4. Emphasises that the United Kingdom's departure from the EU will have consequences for internal and external trade; calls on the Commission to anticipate the impact of Brexit on the Union's trade policy and to ensure continuity in the implementation of EU trade policy and relations with third countries and also ways of finding a solution as regards common commitments in the WTO;

5. Takes note of Opinion 2/15 of the CJEU, of 16 May 2017, establishing that, apart from the question of portfolio investment and the arrangements for investor-state dispute settlement, the FTA with Singapore lies within the exclusive competence of the Union; asks the Commission and the Council to clarify at the earliest possible date their decision on the structure of FTAs in the future and to fully respect this distribution of competences between the EU and its Member States for the adoption of negotiating directives, the negotiations, the legal basis of proposals to sign and conclude, and in particular for the Council's signature and conclusion of international trade agreements, in order not to further delay any agreed but not yet ratified trade deals with trade partners; points out that Parliament must be involved and must be kept fully informed from the onset of all trade negotiations, prior to the adoption of negotiating guidelines, in a timely manner, at all stages of the mandate conferral, and of the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements; demands that the necessary arrangements to be made through an interinstitutional agreement in the context of the Better Law-Making agreement;

6. Notes that, despite the US withdrawal from negotiations, the remaining 11 countries managed to reach a deal on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement on 23 January 2018 in Tokyo;

State of progress of the Union's trade negotiations programme

7. Deplores the failure to reach agreement at the WTO ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires; stresses the primary political and economic importance of the multilateral system and reiterates its support for the system; calls on the Union actively to advance proposals for updated, multilateral rules, taking into account new challenges emerging from global value chains, and to promote the central role of the WTO within the global system of trade; welcomes the entry into force of the Trade Facilitation Agreement; welcomes the extension of the WTO waiver for pharmaceutical products for least developed countries (LDCs) until 2033; considers it regrettable that certain multilateral agreements are not being observed and calls on the Commission to work harder, within the WTO, on the effective implementation of multilateral rules and agreements; recalls its previous demand to the Commission to engage in framing the WTO agenda, in particular with respect to Corporate Social Responsibility and trade and sustainable development; reiterates its concern over US blockages of new appointments to the WTO appellate body and stresses the importance of a well-functioning dispute settlement system at the WTO; calls on the Commission to enhance cooperation with our major partners in addressing unfair competition and protectionist practices by third countries;

8. Notes the stand-off in plurilateral negotiations on the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) and the Environmental Goods Agreement; calls for the Union to take the initiative to get both negotiation processes moving again, and in the case of the TiSA negotiations, in line with Parliament's position on TiSA;

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9. Emphasises that several FTAs, e.g. the trade agreements with Canada and Ecuador, the DCFTA provisions in the EU-Ukraine association agreement and several Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African countries, have entered into force fully or provisionally and that trade agreements with Singapore, Vietnam and Japan have been concluded since the Trade for All strategy was published; underlines the need to give enough political and administrative support to ensure that trade deals can be agreed and ratified within appropriate timeframes; supports the ongoing process of modernisation of the trade agreements with Chile and Mexico; recalls its request to start the negotiations with Australia and New Zealand, taking into account its positions;

10. Highlights that mutually beneficial trade and investment relations with EU strategic partners should be further promoted and enhanced; calls for renewed efforts to advance negotiations on the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with China, particularly concerning reciprocity in market access treatment and progress on sustainable development;

11. Emphasises that the agreements concluded and the Union's ongoing and forthcoming bilateral negotiations represent opportunities for growth through market access and the lifting of trade barriers; asks the Commission to continuously engage with stakeholders to assess priorities in ongoing negotiations; recalls that priority must be given to the substance of the negotiations rather than their pace, that the negotiations must be conducted in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit, that EU rules and standards must be secured, preventing threats to the EU's social model and the environment, and that public services, including services of general interest and services of general economic interest, in line with Articles 14 and 106 TFEU and Protocol No 26, as well as audiovisual services, must be excluded; stresses that the Commission must ensure in all trade negotiations that EU and national and local authorities retain the full right to introduce, adopt, maintain or repeal any measures with regard to the commissioning, organisation, funding and provision of public services as has been the case with previous trade agreements;

12. Asks the Commission and Member States to review and, if necessary, update the negotiating mandates for the ongoing trade negotiations every five years in order to reflect potentially changing contexts and challenges, and to include review clauses in trade agreements to ensure that they are implemented as effectively as possible and that they are adaptable in order to reflect and adapt to current contexts, provided that parliamentary scrutiny and transparency are guaranteed;

13. Points out that the Commission has announced on more than one occasion the launch of negotiations about investment with Hong Kong and Taiwan, and calls on the Commission to finish the preparatory work in order to formally start negotiations on investment agreements as soon as possible;

14. Highlights the importance to the European economy of internal and external investment and the need to ensure that EU investors abroad are protected; asks the Commission to pursue its work on the new multilateral system for ruling on investment disputes, which must be based, inter alia, on a guarantee of states' right to regulate and on transparency, and provide for an appeal mechanism, strict rules on conflict of interest and a code of conduct; considers that this new system has to address investors' obligations, prevent frivolous litigation, preserve the right to regulate in the public interest and avoid regulatory chill, guarantee judicial equality among investors (with particular attention to micro-enterprises and SMEs), independence, transparency and accountability; to explore the possible inclusion of procedural provisions on, inter alia, counterclaims where investments subject to a claim have been made in violation of applicable laws, and avoiding parallel claims in different avenues to justice, thereby clarifying its relationship to domestic courts;

15. Calls on the Member States to finally unblock the procedure regarding the Mauritius Convention on Transparency in Treaty-based Investor-State Arbitration now that the CJEU has brought clarity regarding questions of competence, and on the Commission to redouble its efforts in this respect; request also that the review of the grandfathering regulation for bilateral investment treaties maintained by the Member States be brought forward from 2020;

16. Expects a reinforced engagement of the EU and its Member States in deliberations within the UN regarding a Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights;

17. Notes with concern that the reform of rules of origin announced in the Trade for All strategy has not been implemented; highlights the complexity of rules of origin and reiterates its call for updated, easily applicable and clearer rules of origin; stresses the commitment made at the Euromed 10th Trade Ministerial Conference to finalise the revision of the Pan-Euromed Convention on Rules of Origin by the end 2018; reiterates its call to the Commission to draw up a report on the state of play with regard to rules of origin, taking into account the cumulative effects of rules of origin through bilateral FTAs;

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18. Points out that, in the implementation of Union trade policy, special attention needs to be paid to agricultural products and to the interests of European producers and consumers, in particular in light of the cumulative impact of all FTAs on the sector; emphasises that trade agreements, and notably the agreement with Japan, can open up new business horizons for the agrifood sector; notes that the Union is the largest exporter of agrifood products in the world; highlights the importance of striking the right balance between protecting sensitive agricultural products and advancing the Union's offensive interests in relation to agrifood exports, with provision for, inter alia, transition periods and suitable quotas, and in certain cases for the possible exclusion of the most sensitive products; points out that it is essential to safeguard a robust system of health and plant-health rules in line with the EU precautionary principle while combating any form of discriminatory treatment in this area;

The reciprocity principle as a pillar of Union trade policy and a guarantee of fair competition

19. Strongly believes that one of the main goals of the Union's trade policy should be to promote fair competition and ensure a level playing field; welcomes the references to the principle of reciprocity in the report on implementation of the Union trade strategy; reiterates that reciprocity must be a pillar of Union trade policy while taking into account the need for asymmetries with developing countries when it is relevant and preferential treatment provisions for least-developed nations; notes the Commission's amended proposal for a regulation on the access of third-country goods and services to the Union's internal market in public procurement, which could be an important tool for ensuring a level playing field in the market access of third countries; takes the view that the initiative on screening of foreign direct investments into the European Union aims to protect the security and the public order of the Union and the Member States and could make for greater reciprocity in the area of access to markets while ensuring continued openness to foreign direct investment;

20. Points out that trade policy must be implemented in such a way as to help ensure that companies can compete fairly on a level playing field; welcomes the adoption of the new method for calculating anti-dumping duties in cases of distortion of competition in third countries; takes note of the interinstitutional agreement reached on the modernisation of trade defence instruments; stresses the new possibility they offer, in particular with respect to imposing duties above the injury margin; highlights the importance of ensuring that these new instruments are implemented properly by intervening immediately to rectify any dysfunctions or abuses, proportionally and in full compliance with WTO law and the Union's other legal obligations; welcomes the Commission's pro-active stance in the deployment of trade defence instruments in 2016, and calls for similar resolve and reactivity when these instruments are used unduly against EU exports by some of our trading partners;

21. Considers it regrettable that the Commission report on the implementation of the trade policy strategy makes scarcely any mention of the task of coordination which needs to be undertaken with customs services; points out that trade policy must work to combat unlawful trading in order to keep EU companies competitive and to ensure a high level of consumer safety; points also to the important role of competition policy in this respect and the need for bilateral and multilateral negotiations to this end;

Using effective cross-cutting measures to implement a trade policy that benefits everyone

22. Calls for trade policy implementation to become an integral component of the Union's trade strategy;

23. Urges the Commission, in cases of dysfunction or hindrance or where a partner fails to observe a commitment, to make immediate use of the tools at its disposal, particularly through recourse to the disputes settlement procedure as well as the existing ad hoc processes foreseen for trade and sustainable development provisions in the Union's FTAs;

24. Calls on the Commission to take stock of the human and financial resources currently available, with a view to improving the preparation of trade agreements for adoption by our co-legislators and the way that trade policy is implemented, and asks that a special trade policy implementation monitoring and continuous evaluation service be set up within the Commission, reporting also to Parliament;

25. Urges the Commission and Member States to do more, particularly through the use of IT, to eliminate all administrative obstacles and unnecessary burdens, to simplify technical procedures and to support companies taking steps to benefit from trade agreements and instruments;

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26. Highlights the vital work done by Union delegations, in conjunction with Member State embassies and social partners, which enables swift and direct action to be taken to ensure that trade provisions are properly implemented and problems and obstacles quickly identified and effectively tackled; believes that Union delegations would benefit from a streamlined system based on a single set of rules and guidance in order to ensure more coherence; encourages the Commission to involve EU delegations in third countries more closely in the transposition of existing and new free-trade agreements, with particular regard to the local start-up scene; encourages the Commission and the EEAS to pursue their work in the field of economic diplomacy, with the involvement of, among others, European chambers of commerce;

27. Asks the Commission to conduct a study of the cumulative impact of trade agreements, sector by sector and country by country, as a contribution to the evaluation of our trade policy and with a view to anticipating and amending its effects;

28. Highlights the fact that certain sectors may experience economic difficulties which are trade related; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop flanking policies taking into account a social perspective, in order to maximise the benefits and minimise the potential negative effects of trade liberalisation; asks the Commission, in this context, to reinforce the effectiveness of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund and make it more pro-active;

29. Encourages the Commission to pursue and intensify its cooperation with international organisations and forums, including the G20, the United Nations, the OECD, the ILO, the World Bank, the World Customs Organisation and the International Organisation for Standardisation, on the development of international standards, their implementation and the monitoring of trade including on social and environmental aspects;

Analysis of the Commission's first Report on Implementation of FTAs

30. Welcomes the publication by the Commission of the first report on implementation of FTAs; asks the Commission to continue publishing the report annually; insists in addition, however, that the Commission should conduct more in-depth comprehensive studies on the implementation of the Union's FTAs, cover the topic in greater depth and ensure that the studies include relevant and appropriate econometric and qualitative analysis and interpretations of data, concrete recommendations, placing in context the figures published and providing additional qualitative information, including – for the implementation of the rules – parts of FTAs such as Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) and public procurements; underlines that this will make it possible to have a comprehensive and better assessment of the real impact of agreements on the ground with a view to making the report effective in guiding the EU institutions on the definition and conduct of the Union's trade strategy; believes, in this connection, that a common methodology should be identified and used for these studies;

31. Asks the Commission to report on provisions of most favoured nation (MFN) treatment in existing EU bilateral FTAs and on their practical effect in guaranteeing additional EU market access in third countries through FTAs negotiated by the EU's FTA partners;

32. Points out that various elements of information, as well as figures, are missing from the report; asks the Commission to work more closely with the Member States and partner countries in order to obtain more data and information on the implementation of the agreements; asks the Commission to provide information on, among other things, the impact on growth and jobs of all FTAs, the contribution of FTAs to the evolution of trade flows and the impact of trade and investment agreements on investment flows and trade in services;

33. Is concerned at the poor use of trade preferences in the Union's FTAs, in particular at the fact that European exporters use them to a lesser degree than partner countries' exporters; asks the Commission to determine the causes of the imbalance as quickly as possible and to address them; asks the Commission to analyse the relationship between complex origin rules and the uptake of preferential trade agreements by economic operators; calls on the Commission and the Member States to move swiftly on developing measures to give economic operators more information about the trade preferences provided for in the FTAs; believes that detailed information, including at micro level, is required in order to properly assess the implementation of the EU's FTA;

34. Considers that the Commission should pay as much attention to implementation of the provisions of FTAs as it does to the negotiation phase; calls on the Commission to address the implementation problems with the relevant EU trade partners in order to find solutions and systematise exchanges with European operators;

35. Invites the Commission to take a diversified approach to the various sectors studied and to set out the consequences of the implementation of trade agreements for those sectors which are considered sensitive;

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36. Welcomes the announced introduction of implementation roadmaps for all trade agreements, and asks the Commission to involve all the interested parties in preparing them; calls on the Commission to set out the intended objectives and specific criteria on which to base a clear evaluation, such as the state of progress on the removal of non-tariff barriers, the utilisation rate of preferences and of quotas, or the situation with regard to regulatory cooperation and the progress in terms of trade and sustainable development; expects the implementation roadmaps to be transmitted to Parliament in parallel with the official referral and asks that the state of progress with the roadmaps be incorporated into the annual report on implementation of FTAs;

37. Points out that trade agreements, including trade chapters in association agreements, cannot come into force until they have been ratified by Parliament; believes that the practice of awaiting Parliament's consent before provisionally applying politically important agreements must be respected horizontally, as committed to by Commissioner Malmström in her hearing of 29 September 2014;

Specific Common Commercial Policy provisions for SMEs

38. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the entire toolkit for SMEs, with a view to developing a more integrated overall approach and a real SME internationalisation strategy, supporting them in becoming exporters; encourages the Commission to promote this approach in international forums; supports the engagement in efficient information campaigns for SMEs in an effort to improve preference utilisation rates in EU FTAs; highlights the importance of multilingualism in addressing SMEs from all the Member States; asks for more legal and administrative support to be made available for SMEs thinking of exporting to foreign markets, not just by updating websites but also by considering the use of new tools such as online technical chats that could provide basic and more easily accessible support; asks that the Union's delegations take part in contributing to the information about exporting to the respective overseas markets, with a view to help SMEs;

39. Considers it regrettable that the Commission report on implementation of FTAs contains little information about SMEs; asks the Commission to devote a specific section of the report to how the implementation of trade agreements is affecting SMEs and how the SME-specific provisions are being used;

40. Welcomes the introduction of specific chapters dedicated to SMEs in FTAs currently under negotiation and asks the Commission to continue its efforts in negotiating and including SME-specific chapters and provisions in the trade agreements it negotiates and in its legislative proposals in order to improve the ability of small and medium enterprises to engage in trade and investment; emphasises that understanding the complexity of rules of origin, having them updated, and making them easily applicable and clearer is a matter of great importance to SMEs and that SME-specific provisions need to be negotiated to address the matter of small companies' access to public procurement markets abroad; asks the Commission to endeavour to provide a rules-of-origin calculator tailored to SMEs that should specifically enable them to use the preferences available under existing agreements with a view to increasing the preference utilisation rate;

The importance of public procurement market access and of the protection of geographical indications

41. Notes that the protection of geographical indications is one of the Union's offensive points in trade agreement negotiations; highlights the finding in the report on implementation of FTAs that certain partners are not complying with provisions on the protection of geographical indications, and calls on the Commission to act without delay to ensure compliance with these provisions;

42. Points out that the Union's public procurement markets are the most open in the world; is concerned at certain partners' non-compliance with EU FTAs' provisions on public-procurement market access, to the detriment of EU companies, and at the very limited access to public procurement markets in certain third countries; asks the Commission to work to secure greater access to third countries' public procurement markets and to consider measures, in compliance with GPA rules, to be used with third countries that give their domestic companies priority access to their public procurement markets; calls on the Commission to collect and publish company-level data on the use of public procurement provisions in FTAs so as to better understand the difficulties encountered by EU businesses;

43. Asks the Commission to supply more information on how access to public procurement markets has changed over recent years, as well as relevant statistics, and to include specific information on the benefits derived from the protection of geographical indications;

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Effective trade policy implementation helps to promote and protect Union values

44. Recalls that the Common Commercial Policy must contribute to the promotion of the values for which the Union stands, set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, and to the pursuit of the aims listed in Article 21, including the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights, as well as fundamental rights and freedoms, equality, respect for human dignity and the protection of the environment and of social rights; believes that achieving these objectives requires resolute and sustained actions from the Commission; underlines that the UN Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement on Climate provide primary benchmarks against which to measure the contribution of the EU's trade policy to agreed global sustainable development goals;

45. Calls on the Commission systematically monitor the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), particularly the GSP+, and to continue publishing reports every two years; calls on the Commission to work harder with beneficiary countries, the EEAS, the Union delegations, Member States' diplomatic missions, international organisations, companies, the social partners and civil society in order to improve its information gathering and provide more in-depth analysis of the monitoring exercise so that the implementation of all aspects of the system can be clearly evaluated; stresses that the effectiveness of the GSP rests on the ability of the Commission to monitor and implement the provisions of the legislation in cases of failure to implement international labour or environmental conventions;

46. Points out that the new-generation agreements include human rights clauses and sustainable development chapters, to be implemented comprehensively in their entirety in order to safeguard and promote the observance of human rights, the Union's values and high social and environmental standards; notes the evaluation of the sustainable development chapters included in the Commission report on implementation of FTAs and calls for a timely implementation of existing TSD provisions; asks the Commission to develop a precise and specific methodology of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these chapters, given that such an evaluation cannot be made on the basis of quantitative data only; recalls that there are difficulties in the implementation of the TSD provisions in certain cases, for instance with the EU-Korea FTA, and therefore reiterates its call to strengthen the enforcement and monitoring of TSD chapters, through greater involvement of civil society organisations, including social partners, in all trade agreements; regrets that the Commission has prematurely concluded the debate on how to strengthen the enforcement of the sustainable development chapter in trade agreements, including the consideration of a sanctions-based approach among other options;

47. Recalls in this context the important role of Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs); emphasises the potential added value of a more structured and transparent relationship with DAGs in trading partners, recognising their key role in a better comprehension of the local imperatives and local ambitions; considers that DAGs are vital in contributing to the processes required for a better monitoring and implementation of TSD chapters;

48. Welcomes the review of the Aid for Trade strategy and supports the aim of capacity building for developing countries so that they can take greater advantage of the opportunities offered by EU trade agreements; emphasises also that the strategy must help to promote fair and ethical trade and should become a key tool in combating rising global inequality and supporting economic development in the EU partner countries; encourages the Commission to help developing countries to adopt the necessary measures to, among others, maintain access to the European market for their exports and to combat climate change;

49. Reaffirms its support for the inclusion in all future trade agreements of ambitious provisions on combating corruption within the Union's exclusive competence; welcomes the inclusion of anti-corruption provisions in the ongoing negotiations on updating the EU-Mexico FTA and EU-Chile Association Agreements; recalls that FTAs offer a good opportunity to increase cooperation in the fight against money laundering, tax fraud and tax evasion;

50. Welcomes the fact that gender equality has been taken into account in the Commission's report on the implementation of its trade strategy; underscores the aim of ensuring that women benefit from trade to the same extent as men, including through the Aid for trade strategy; stresses that this requires a proactive approach by the Commission, promoting gender mainstreaming in the EU trade policy, and asks the Commission to include this aspect in its future annual implementation reports;

51. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to ensuring that the trade negotiations to modernise the current EU-Chile Association Agreement will include, for the first time in the EU, a specific chapter on gender and trade; reiterates its call on the Commission and the Council to promote and support the inclusion of a specific gender chapter in EU trade and investment agreements;

52. Welcomes the adoption of the Anti-torture Regulation and stresses the importance of ensuring that it is properly implemented and observed by our trade partners; supports the launching of the international Alliance for Torture-Free Trade;

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53. Welcomes the adoption of the Conflict Minerals Regulation ((EU) 2017/821), with its aim of contributing to more responsible management of the global value chain; calls on the Commission, the Member States and other stakeholders to press ahead with preparations for the regulation's entry into force; calls on the Commission to ensure that the accompanying measures are devised efficiently and that the Member States and national stakeholders involved are provided with the necessary expertise and assistance, with a special emphasis on accompanying SMEs in enhancing their capacity to fulfil their due diligence requirements, as stipulated by the regulation;

54. Recognises the proliferation of integrated global supply chains in international trade patterns; reiterates its call to seek ways of developing global value chain transparency and accountability strategies and rules, and emphasises that the Common Commercial Policy must be implemented in such a way as to ensure that the global value chain is managed responsibly; asks the Commission to promote and reinforce corporate social responsibility (CSR) as part of its trade policy, including further actions towards developing specific rules and practices, taking into account the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, in order to ensure effective implementation of CSR; reiterates its demand to the Commission to include CSR in all trade agreements and to monitor effectively these provisions, within the improved independent monitoring of TSD chapter requested by Parliament, which involves civil society; reasserts its support for international initiatives such as the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact, and asks the Commission to concentrate on the implementation of that initiative;

55. Calls on the Commission and all international actors to adhere to the new OECD due diligence guidelines for responsible supply chains in the garment and footwear sector;

56. Recalls that EU trade and development policy must globally contribute to sustainable development, regional integration and the incorporation of developing countries into regional and ultimately global value chains through economic diversification, which necessitates fair and pro-development global trade rules; calls on the Commission to continue to support the development of a fair Continental Free Trade Area in Africa through political and technical assistance;

57. Recalls that the EU is committed to eradicating the worst forms of child labour at global level, as this arises from our values, as enshrined in Article 21 TEU; reiterates its call on the Commission to put forward a proposal to ban the importation of goods produced using child labour or any other form of forced labour or modern slavery; underlines, in this context, the importance of countries that have not yet done so ratifying ILO Conventions No 182 on the worst forms of child labour and No 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment and work;

58. Notes the progress on the conclusion and implementation of EPAs; deems that an in-depth analysis is needed of their impact on African economies and their sub-sectors, their respective labour markets and the promotion of intra-regional trade in Africa; calls on the Commission to advance dialogue in a spirit of genuine partnership in order to address outstanding issues; recalls that EPAs are asymmetrical agreements which should accord equal importance to development and trade aspects; calls in this regard for the timely implementation of accompanying measures, including the disbursement of EDF resources;

59. Welcomes, furthermore, the implementation of the Cariforum EPA; notes that further awareness-raising is needed to ensure that CARICOM countries are able to take advantage of opportunities under the Agreement; welcomes the establishment of the Joint Consultative Committee, but urges the Commission to ensure that future civil society institutions are convened in a timely fashion;

60. Reiterates its call for the EU to work towards adequate and efficient solutions for the introduction of a transparent and functioning 'social and environmental traceability' labelling system along the entire production chain, in compliance with the WTO TBT Agreement, while in parallel promoting similar action at international level;

EU trade policy implementation must be characterised by transparency and access to information

61. Takes note of the Commission's work on transparency and calls on the Commission to conduct negotiations as transparently as possible, fully respecting best practice as established in other negotiations; believes that achieving transparency must be part of the key objectives of the Commission; calls on the Commission and the Member States to publish the documents relating to the negotiation and implementation of agreements while not undermining the Union's negotiating position;

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62. Calls on the Commission and Member States to develop a proper strategy for communication about trade policy and about each agreement, so that as much information as possible is transmitted and information is adapted for specific stakeholders, enabling them to benefit from the agreements; calls on the Commission and Member States to come up with measures for raising economic operators' awareness about agreements concluded and for sustaining dialogue on a regular basis with professional associations, companies and civil society;

63. Welcomes the publication by the Council of the negotiating mandates for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), CETA, TiSA, the agreements with Japan, Tunisia and Chile, and the MIC Convention, as well as the Commission's publication of its draft negotiating mandates for agreements with Australia and New Zealand and for the creation of the MIC in line with the Parliament's longstanding demand for transparency; calls on the Council and the Member States to publish all negotiating mandates, and on the Commission to publish all draft mandates for the opening of future negotiations; asks the Council and the Commission, when they are drafting and adopting negotiating mandates, to incorporate Parliament's recommendations;

64. Reiterates its request that the Member States, the European Parliament, the national parliaments, economic operators and representatives of civil society and social partners should be more closely involved in trade policy monitoring, including – but not limited to – TSD provisions; calls on the Commission to publish an action plan and details of the 'Enhanced Partnership' model for the implementation of trade agreements;

65. Asks the Commission to improve the quality of the impact studies carried out for each trade agreement and to include in them sectoral and geographical analysis; stresses that better and more timely communication about the information contained in ex ante and ex post impact studies on trade agreements is essential;

66. Welcomes the announcement that a consultative group is being set up to monitor trade policy; stresses the importance of establishing the new body rapidly and in a transparent, public and inclusive way; asks the Commission to publish the consultative group's meeting and working documents on a regular basis; calls on the Commission also to define processes to ensure that a proper response is given on issues raised by the consultative group;

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67. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the national parliaments of the Member States, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.
