

21 November 2011

Speaking points
Meeting with EBO Network (22/11/2011)

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Mr Collins,

I am very pleased, as its Vice-Chair, to represent the Committee on International Trade of the European Parliament for this meeting with the European Business Organizations from around the world. Welcome to you all and thank you for coming to the European Parliament as you are in Brussels for your annual congress.

Every year INTA is pleased to have an informal meeting with you to present our work in progress and our recent achievements and of course to hear from you. We know that you have formalised your grouping into a real Brussels institution, the EBO network, and this will undoubtedly foster the exchanges between our Committee and your organization.

To start this meeting, I would like to make a **few introductory remarks regarding the work of INTA:**

- Following the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, this Committee has grown in stature and its workload has substantially increased. We are now the Committee in Parliament with the highest number of active files.
- The nature of the work has also changed. Not only does this Committee continue to oversee the ongoing negotiations led by the European Commission at the multilateral and at the bilateral level, Parliament is co-legislator for matters of common commercial policy on equal footing with Member states of the EU, i.e. the Council.
- Moreover, I believe that this Committee has also issued reports from its own initiative which are reference documents to understand our work, our positions and our expectations from the EU trade and investment policy, for which the prerogatives of initiatives and international negotiations remain obviously in the hands of the European Commission.
- To name only but a few, I would pick for 2011:

- the report on the future European international investment policy (for which the rapporteur was Kader Arif, S&D, France),
- the report on a New Trade Policy for Europe under the Europe 2020 Strategy (for which the rapporteur was Daniel Caspary, EPP, Germany),
- and the recent report on trade and investments barriers (for which the rapporteur was Robert Sturdy, ECR, UK).

These reports express the views of the Committee and of the European Parliament after their adoption in plenary and are publicly available. I would refer you to these documents for further details on these key topics.

Now I know that you would like to have an **overview of INTA's concerns and plans for next year**. I can tell you already that we will have again a very full agenda which I will try to briefly describe:

- The Committee on International Trade will continue its examination of the proposals of the Commission for EU legislation regarding common commercial policy. Among ongoing files, you probably noticed the review of the legislations on the Generalized System of Preferences and on Macro Financial assistance to third countries.
- We will also have clear position reports from our own initiative on trade relations with China, and on trade aspects of the European Neighbourhood Policy with regards to our Southern and Eastern close partners.
- We will also react to just-released or planned proposals by the Commission on Trade and Development, Internationalisation of SMEs, the review of Trade Defence Instruments, etc.
- Now turning to concluded or ongoing international trade negotiations. International agreements will continue to remain in our scope of careful examination. We are very much supportive of the multilateral trade negotiations but the reality that meagre progress has been achieved in the last months of the Doha Round is undeniable. A delegation of INTA Members will attend the Ministerial Conference of the WTO and we hope for an ambitious agenda to be set for the first semester 2012 for negotiations finally to bear fruits in Geneva.
- As for other agreements, mostly bilateral, the agenda of the EU is by contrast very active and a few cases of upcoming files for consent of the European Parliament come to mind: of course the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, the Trade Agreements with Central America and Columbia/Peru, the DCFTA with Ukraine, and also bilateral deals of the EU with Russia as part of its accession to WTO. These are agreements on which Parliament will have to express its position.
- But we do also monitor ongoing negotiations and soon this Committee will have standing monitoring groups of INTA Members to oversee the progress of each negotiation. The biggest files are obviously the FTA with India and the CETA with Canada as well as developments in Asia. Recently INTA Members were in

Japan and we follow with attention the scoping exercise for a FTA with Japan. In the region, our Committee also watches with interest the implementation of the Korea agreement and individual negotiations with countries in ASEAN, such as Singapore.

- It is also in our plan to follow closely the EU Bilateral Investment Treaties and for that we have an eye on the draft mandates for negotiating such investment treaties to ensure that they follow past recommendations expressed by our Committee. Also, the prospect of an investment treaty with a major partner such as China will be carefully examined.
- For your information and to finish on our work programme, we have also scheduled two delegations outside the EU for next year. INTA Committee Members will travel to East Africa and to Russia in 2012.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that **this Committee regards the relation with EBO very highly:**

- Business organizations are not only necessary to shape a better EU trade policy, connected to real problems on the ground. They provide also support to EU initiatives and contribute to the expansion of European companies. We value the important of business climate in third countries and support initiatives by the European Commission and by local governments to remove unnecessary barriers to business, in particular corruption, and to improve rule of law while promoting human and labour rights and corporate social responsibility.
- The budgetary positions taken by INTA, again recently for the EU budget 2012, reflect that concern. We have promoted EU SME Centres: there we want to ensure proper functioning of the external business centres (Beijing, four locations in India and the ASEAN Trade Centre in Thailand). The Committee also supported the launch of the "Enterprise Network", to help European businesses, SMEs in particular, gain market access in fast growing third countries by building intelligence platforms between EU companies and adequate partners.
- Besides, we have seen with interest that the European Commission has finally issued their Communication to foster the internationalisation of SMEs, which will give a much-needed external dimension to the European Small Business Act of 2008. At that time, this Committee had perceived, as it expressed at that time in its report by our Vice-Chair Ms Cristiana Muscardini, the need to develop a trade and investment strategy specific to SMEs and we can now react to the proposal of the Commission in the coming months.

I now would like to give you the floor to hear from your perspectives on the EU trade policy, on your initiatives and on the hurdles you face in your markets and, if you have any further question, I will be happy to answer them. Afterwards, and if time allows, the floor will be open for other questions from our side.