

From: Art. 4.1 b (TRADE)
Sent: 19 February 2015 13:28
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Subject: Event on trade agreements in Bergamo
Importance: Low

Yesterday I took part to an event in Bergamo on the opportunities created by EU trade agreements for Italian companies

Bergamo is the manufacturing heart of Italy, and exports 40% of its GDP outside Europe (they say). Key sectors are machinery, metals, chemicals, textile, agri-food, companies vary from the very big steel companies to the micro (grouped in clusters).

Key speaker was MEP Alessia Mosca (S&D), who is from the region. Other speakers: the mayor, the president of the province, Prof. Consolati of Rome university and working on SME issues. Audience of about 100 with local authorities/chambers/entrepreneurs/citizens.

The Major underlined the linkage between innovation and internationalisation: only companies that follow both of these strategies can be successful. Can't rest on previous strengths but need to keep innovating and looking for new markets. Local government tries to help.

I presented the narrative on trade is good for growth and jobs, benefits from recent agreements including reciprocity, opportunities from TTIP and Japan. Using the example of local SMEs, I outlined the benefits of main chapters of TTIP on tariffs, customs, regulatory, information for SMEs. At the end of the day, however, trade policy can only create opportunities, then it is for companies to seize them, with assistance of local chambers/authorities.

Prof. Consolati explained the principles of the Small Business Act and recalled that Lombardy was already innovative in SME policies. On TTIP he was more sceptical, yes they may be opportunities but also risks, will be invaded by US products.

MEP Mosca made an intervention on the line that trade policy is very useful and an example of good things the Europe can do for us. Local business can reach out to MEPs and EP will make sure that trade policy is conducted in a transparent way and in the interest of all. On TTIP there will be much more opportunities than risks. EP is watching and guiding negotiators, most texts are public: this means that we have the conditions to do the very best agreement that we can in the interest of all. She said she'd been in Rome to work on a positive party line on TTIP.

Questions on

- flooded by imports from US/Chinese products (they are here already, but with trade agreement we create level playing field + complementarity with US/GVCs)
- quid services/design/architects? (TiSA, mutual recognition of diplomas)

- GMOs, ISDS: Mosca: public text clearly shows no change of GMO legislation in TTIP. ISDS is in all BITs. Choice is between trying to have a good European model, or denouncing all BITs of all MS. Does not work to say that we don't want it in TTIP but DE keeps its BITs.

Art. 4.1b

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