

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1999



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Session document

13 March 2002

B5-0137/2002 }
B5-0175/2002 }
B5-0176/2002 }
B5-0177/2002 }
B5-0179/2002 }

RC1

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rule 37(4) of the Rules of Procedure by

- W.G. van Velzen, Konrad K. Schwaiger, James E.M. Elles, Ilkka Suominen and Sir Robert Atkins, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
- Eryl Margaret McNally and Erika Mann, on behalf of the PSE Group
- Nicholas Clegg, Willy C.E.H. De Clercq and Elly Plooij-van Gorsel, on behalf of the ELDR Group
- Francis Wurtz, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group
- Pat the Cope Gallagher, on behalf of the UEN Group

replacing the motions by the following groups:

- ELDR (B5-0137/2002),
- GUE/NGL (B5-0175/2002),
- PSE (B5-0176/2002),
- UEN (B5-0177/2002),
- PPE-DE (B5-0179/2002),

on US tariffs on steel imports

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PE 314.921 }
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European Parliament resolution on US tariffs on steel imports

The European Parliament,

1. Deplores the protectionist US decision to impose extraordinary tariffs of up to 30% on steel imports, in flagrant violation of WTO rules, with a strategy of targeting mainly imports from the EU, but damaging also other steel producers around the world, with the exception of countries such as Canada and Mexico; fears that this arbitrary act follows a pattern which is damaging the reputation of the USA and harming efforts to build international partnership;
2. Condemns this attempt to solve the difficulties of the USA's uncompetitive steel industry at the expense of European and other steel producers; takes the view that the EU must not bear the costs of the restructuring of the US steel industry, which has been avoided for too long by successive US administrations; points out that the US difficulties reflect this failure to restructure, as well as inadequate R&D in steel and the enormous overhang of so-called 'legacy costs' for US steel producers, and that imports, which have fallen by 33% since 1998 - while EU steel imports rose by 18% - are manifestly not the problem;
3. Points to the lengthy restructuring, involving the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, which the EU steel industry has undergone; expresses its understanding for US steel workers threatened with redundancy, but suggests that their plight can only be effectively addressed by a US government prepared to deal with the problem of legacy costs and to ease the process of restructuring through training and social programmes comparable to those funded by European governments during restructuring; regrets that the US administration has not taken up the EU suggestion of financing such programmes through a levy on all sales of steel on the US market, as an alternative to protectionism;
4. Emphasises that, while protectionism rarely assists those it is designed to help, these tariffs could penalise other American industries and American consumers;
5. Fears that these measures will jeopardise the search, conducted through the OECD, for an internationally agreed solution to problems of overcapacity and state subsidies; calls on the OECD high-level group on steel issues and its working groups to continue to address these issues at their next meetings;
6. Congratulates the Commission on its decision to take a case immediately to the WTO and to take all necessary measures to safeguard the EU steel industry which respect WTO rules; strongly supports the Commission's demand for compensation; calls on the Commission to explore vigorously all legal possibilities available in this context for retaliatory action, and to report back as soon as possible on the possibilities for provisional measures and on the establishment of the WTO panel; asks to be consulted on the results of the talks in the cooling-off period;

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7. Calls on the Commission to continue bilateral talks with the USA to find an amicable solution; underlines the common responsibility for free and fair trade within the multilateral trading system and points to the fact that a transatlantic trade war would damage the EU, the USA and the multilateral trading system; calls on the US administration to face up to its responsibilities to avert the threat of a trade war;
8. Calls on the competent EU bodies to use their transatlantic dialogues as well as the upcoming EU-US summit to protest strongly against this destabilising approach to international affairs;
9. Calls on the Barcelona European Council to make the strongest possible response to the Bush administration's breach of international rules;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the US President and Congress, the WTO, the OECD and the governments and parliaments of the EU Member States and applicant countries.