



## Resolution 948 (1990)<sup>1</sup>

# Uruguay Round - Prospects and obstacles

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly notes with satisfaction that world merchandise trade in 1989 reached the record level of 3,1 trillion dollars, representing an increase of 7,5% over 1988, and that for the seventh consecutive year trade expanded faster than world production.
2. This notwithstanding, the 96 countries belonging to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and which together account for more than four-fifths of world trade, stand before a historic crossroads as they approach the end of the four-year Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations to be concluded by the end of 1990.
3. The main choices are, firstly, between a firm commitment to a multilateral, all-encompassing world trade system based on GATT or a gradual slippage into a myriad of bilateral agreements and eventual world trade anarchy, and, secondly, between a process leading to freer trade or a retreat to overt or covert protectionism.
4. While further liberalisation of merchandise trade is essential, it is equally important to reach agreement :
  - 4.1. in the field of agriculture with its multiple functions and its fundamental importance for world food security and rural development, as well as
  - 4.2. in so-called "new" areas taken up within the GATT framework for the first time, such as intellectual property rights and services - sectors which grow extremely fast and already account for one-third of world trade.
5. Simultaneously, international trade relations are increasingly affected by nations' domestic policies as regards, for example, market access and subsidies - a development which renders GATT negotiations even more complex.
6. A major factor behind recent trade growth has been the development of regional economic groupings such as the European economic space and the United States-Canadian free trade area.
7. Whereas the share of developing countries in world exports as a whole has risen significantly in recent years, leading to a spectacular rise in wealth for certain among them, others, and notably the least developed countries, are in virtual decline and unable to develop economically due to, inter alia, crippling foreign debt and unfavourable terms of trade with industrialised countries.
8. There is, furthermore, the challenge of integrating the economies of reformist countries in Central and Eastern Europe into the mainstream of world trade, and of associating them more closely with GATT — developments which would not only enhance the prospects of democracy in the region concerned, but could also invigorate the entire world economy.
9. The Assembly, in consequence, calls on Council of Europe member states :
  - 9.1. to do their utmost to ensure that the Uruguay Round is crowned with success and heralds an era of expanding, open and increasingly unfettered world trade ;

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1. See [Doc. 6253](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development, Rapporteur : Mr Eicher. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 3 July 1990.



9.2. to support GATT in its effort to maintain a uniform world trade regime, in particular by avoiding as far as possible bilateral agreements outside its framework, by submitting any serious trade conflicts to its arbitration and reconciliation procedures, by strengthening its competences and widening its areas of responsibility ;

9.3. to ensure that the regional trading arrangements they create - and notably the post-1992 internal market of the European Community and the European economic space foreseen between the Community and EFTA countries - in no way become restrictive vis-à-vis third countries, but are instead allowed to make their full contribution to an expanded world trade ;

9.4. to work strenuously and generously towards integrating into the world trading community the two groups of countries that have so far remained largely outside it - the less developed countries and the reformist nations of Central and Eastern Europe - in particular by alleviating their debt burden and granting them greater access to markets ;

9.5. to work for the conclusion within GATT of an agreement restricting or, as the case may be, banning trade in products essential for the survival or the genetic diversity of the planet, such as wood from rapidly disappearing tropical forests, and in the meantime to take every possible measure serving this purpose ;

9.6. to give their support to a liberalisation of trade in agricultural commodities within GATT, while working for a recognition of such non-trade concerns as environmental issues, preservation of the landscape, food security and social aspects of farming (guidelines should be drawn up on minimum ecological and health standards for trade in agricultural commodities which in the medium-term perspective could be included in GATT agreements on trade in such commodities).