

New ESF Priorities for the DDA

- a) Multilateralism remains our preferred route and the WTO is much the most effective means of opening up markets around the world;
- b) All efforts should be undertaken by the EU and all WTO members to put the DDA (Doha Development Agenda) round of negotiations back on track by the end of 2003;
- c) The EU should now focus on the real EU priorities in these multilateral trade negotiations. **Trade in services** should take centre stage as it has the most to bring to the EU economy. The existing offers are rather disappointing, including from the developed countries like US, Canada, Australia. Many major emerging countries have still not tabled any initial offers and this needs to be remedied.
- d) The GATS negotiations, themselves, are not a controversial issue. Thus the Council for Trade in Services (CTS) Special Sessions and bilateral negotiations on the initial requests and offers could resume forthwith. The GATS negotiations need more time than the other DDA negotiated issues and must be tackled as a matter of urgency.
- e) The ESF continues to support negotiations on trade facilitation and transparency in Government procurement as part of the Single Undertaking. However, given the way the debate went in Cancun, the ESF does not press for the retention of investment and competition on the Doha agenda. We would support a plurilateral route for negotiations on the latter issues so as to allow interested countries to set up rules and implement commitments in a flexible manner. This would also enable other countries to join at a later stage.
- f) The WTO is a trade organisation and one objective of the DDA is to ensure that the developing countries can use trade as an instrument for their own development. Special and Differential Treatment should be understood in that context. Therefore, it needs to be made clear that transitional periods and technical assistance will be granted only to countries which agree to commit to market access in specific sectors.
- g) The WTO has to remain the main trade policy instrument for the EU. But the European services industry cannot ignore situations where its major competitors are gaining new market access via bilateral free trade agreements. The EU should therefore, as an additional trade policy tool, conclude the ongoing bilateral and bi-regional free trade agreements and be ready to open new ones when appropriate.

The European Services Forum (ESF) is a network of high-level representatives from the European Services Sector committed to promoting the interests of European services and the liberalisation of services markets throughout the world through WTO Services Negotiations. It comprises more than 40 major European service companies at the CEO level and more than 35 European service sector federations covering service sectors like financial services, tourism, telecommunications, air and maritime transport, business and professional services, distribution, postal and express delivery, IT services, energy services and the audio-visual industry (see list of members and position papers in the web-site: www.esf.be).