

3rd Strasbourg Lunch
Wednesday, 15 March 2017

„Trade: How Europe can deliver“



“Trade is obvious what we do better together” Commissioner Cecilia Malmström stated at the 3rd Strasbourg Lunch of the Kangaroo Group. She pointed out that trade agreements of the European Union should be transparent. “Everything that can be published, will be published” to get more confidence of all stakeholders. Europeans want trade to deliver real economic results for consumers, workers and companies. Trade can create growth, employment and investment. But there occurs also a protectional mood in some countries Malmström remarked.

Therefore it is necessary to point out the benefits for all taking part in the agreements. To get more transparency local, regional and national levels should authorise European Commission to work out trade agreements during the negotiation periods to demystify the agreement process. As Commissioner Malmström emphasised the trade agreement between Canada and the European Union could be a blueprint for other agreements on trade. It is good for both consumers and for enterprises.

Chairman of the Committee on International Trade, Bernd Lange, MEP, claimed for more value based decisions and also for negotiation procedures as transparent as possible to achieve more credibility. The trade agreement procedures should be reflected. “It is not acceptable that it needs twelve years to get an agreement.” MEP Lange indicated a real responsibility of the Member States. So it is not possible firstly to discuss and then to disappear.



Latvian MEP Artis Pabriks, Member of the Committee on International Trade, regretted that citizens are used to the European Union but they do not realize the benefits of the EU. He pointed out that CETA “is based on the best practises on both sides of the Atlantic”. The prime motivation is to ensure more wealth from trade. The EU-Canada trade agreement aims to boost trade and investment flows between the EU and the North American country of more than 36 million people.

Alain Lamassoure, MEP, wanted to know what will happen if one region votes against a trade agreement. Markus Ferber, MEP, criticised that groups outside parliament are organizing opposition against CETA although claims from the European Parliament and most of Member States are fulfilled. The importance of benefits for the consumers were highlighted by Vicky Ford, MEP. In addition she remarked that barriers to trade are in nobodies interest and that social media is changing voices.





Commissioner Malmström noted that it was a mistake not to publish the mandate of the trade agreements. In the past the negotiation partners usually set up the agreements and then they were published. Nowadays there is public interest also during the negotiation period. Malmström indicated that the European Commission cannot campaign but will publish documents and facts to raise transparency. But it is the responsibility of the Member States to speak to the people when they have signed the agreements.

