

Draft resolution submitted by: Political Commission 3: External Affairs & Global Governance

For a Free, Fair and Sustainable Trade Policy

Free trade is a foundation of the European Union and one of its most successful achievements. There is no question that it has brought many benefits to the EU and its citizens. However, the current global trade system and certain EU trade policies are not exempt from criticism. As a result, some worrying inclinations towards protectionism have surfaced.

This resolution makes it clear that JEF Europe views protectionism negatively and free trade as generally beneficial. EU trade policies need to be fair, in accordance with European climate ambitions and defined in a transparent and democratic manner. Trade policy is also one of the most effective tools to enhance the affirmation and protection of human rights and the rule of law, the fight against poverty and inequalities and reach better standards both in terms of the production chain and in terms of environmental and social sustainability.

JEF Europe,

- *Recalling* its political platform, in particular point 3.6 where it specifies that the primary aim the common EU trade policy should strive for, is to further Europe's commercial ties with the rest of the world and continue to increase prosperity of all EU citizens;
- *Appreciating* that the primary aim of the common EU trade policy is to further the EU's commercial ties with other parts of the world and continue to increase the EU's prosperity;
- *Believing* that trade contributes to peace while at the same time peace is a prerequisite for successful trade;
- *Further believing* that free trade on equal terms fosters growth and prosperity for all parties involved;
- *Recognising* that trade is also a tool to expand the EU's normative power;
- *Recognising* that the expansion of free trade in Europe, through the European Economic Community, has been instrumental to the improvement of democracy, living standards and respect for human rights among the Member States;
- *Welcoming* the diffusion of values such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights as well as high social and environmental standards;
- *Fully aware* that our system of global free trade is criticised for the lack of social, economic and ecological sustainability;
- *Acknowledging* the increasing evidence on the adverse impacts of imports of certain products such as plantation fruits and cattle livestock, which expansion drives deforestation and is partly driven by rising demand for these products in the EU;
- *Affirming* that estrangement from free and fair world trade is not an answer to such criticism;

- *Acknowledges* that the trade war between the United States and China adds a negative influence on the global market and risks making the fair trade of goods and services increasingly challenging;
- *Deeply concerned* about the increasing voice for protectionism between Member States and around the world;
- *Highlights* the importance for discussions on trade agreements and trade policies to be transparent and involve citizens;
- *Stressing* the importance of involving civil society organisations (CSOs) and their active role in monitoring the process of trade agreements, as well as sharing to ensure greater legitimacy for the public;
- *Emphasising* that the approval of trade agreements by all Member States' parliaments may lead the debate to domestic policy issues, creating confusion for citizens and jeopardising their credibility;
- *Observing* that multilateral trade agreements will continue to be the most effective tool for the diffusion of both economic prosperity and improvement of living standards among a wider region than bilateral agreements;

JEF Europe therefore,

1. *Calls* for new trade agreements to be democratically and transparently discussed and inclusive of civil society and representative organisations;
2. *Calls* for an ever closer connection between civil society organisations and institutions involved in international trade in order to ensure the representation of the manufacturing sector at all levels;
2. *Stresses* the importance for all new trade agreements to contain provisions ensuring high standards for environmental protection and labour rights;
3. *Believes* that a central element of trade agreements is the protection and preservation of the standards of goods and services as much as the development of local producers and service providers, and consequently of the community, as fair and sustainable trade has equal attention to social issues;
4. *Draws* the attention on the close link between food security and global trade, as it became clear during the Covid-19 pandemic, and calls for the EU to adopt a higher safety standard on all food products reaching the EU single market;
5. *Further argues* that trade agreements ought to become an EU tool for ensuring stronger climate action worldwide and that the EU 2050 climate targets are made central to any EU trade strategy;
6. *Insists* that ambitious climate and environmental targets (such as the Paris agreement and Aichi targets) be included in future trade agreements between the EU and trading partners;
7. *Urges* the application of strict climate and environmental conditions (such as imposing a carbon-adjusted border tax on goods which emissions have not been priced in its origin country) in future trade agreements;
8. *Expects* the EU to utilise the collective potency of its economy to spread not only European product standards and trade regulations outside of its external borders but

more significantly to further democratic practices and adherence to the rule of law, human rights and social and environmental standards;

9. *Emphasises* that trade agreements, especially with developing countries, should pursue mutual interest and therefore always ensure the ownership of development strategies (domestic reforms to stimulate long-term trade and investment) to third countries;
10. *Promotes* and endorses a reform of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that will lead to a more structured and efficient organisation and will allow it to take on more importance not only in international trade policies but also in the defence and protection of the most vulnerable actors;
11. *Supports* the application of sanctions (including withdrawal from trade agreements as a last resort) in cases when partners do not respect those standards and values;
12. *Encourages* the use of multilateral and regional platforms and institutions in the discussion and approval of trade agreements as a preferred option over bilateral talks;
13. *Emphasises* that, as an organisation, JEF Europe must advocate against protectionism and showcase the benefits of globalisation and free and sustainable trade;