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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 15 March 2010**

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from: Mr Vital MOREIRA, Chair of the Committee on International Trade of the  
European Parliament

date of reception: 2 March 2010

to: Mr Miguel Sebastian GASCON, President in office of the Council

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Subject : Relations between the European Parliament and the Council - Common  
Commercial policy

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Delegations will find annexed a copy of the above letter.



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Committee on International Trade  
The Chairman

D(2010)7750

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Brussels,

Mr Miguel Sebastián Gascón  
President-in-Office of the Council  
Council of the European Union  
Rue de la Loi 175  
B-1048 Bruxelles

Dear President,

Our two institutions are in the process of implementing the new opportunities provided by the Lisbon Treaty. Hence, the result of the last 10 years of institutional reform is impressive and I would be grateful if we could act jointly, in the spirit of loyal inter-institutional cooperation, to make the European Union's Common Commercial Policy more effective, more efficient, more democratic and more transparent.

The Lisbon Treaty provides many substantial changes for the Common Commercial Policy and, in relation to this, for the European Parliament's and for the Council's powers and responsibilities: According to Article 207 (2) TFEU our two institutions now act as co-legislators on an equal footing when determining the framework for implementing the CCP. Parliament's consent is required for the conclusion of all trade agreements. The Treaty also establishes Parliament and Council as co-legislators in the field of economic, financial and technical cooperation measures, including assistance, in particular financial assistance, with third countries other than developing countries. Finally, the Treaty establishes a legally binding obligation for the Commission to keep Parliament regularly informed on on-going negotiations, with the same degree of information that it provides to the members of the Committee on Trade Policy.

These changes reinforce the European Parliament's profile as the EU's only directly elected institution that legitimises European policy. These reforms "re-parliamentarise" a policy area, which very largely escaped parliamentary scrutiny at the European level for more than 50 years.

To bring our two institutions closer together in the area of International Trade, I would therefore like to make some suggestions.

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Firstly, I would like to ask you to send me a full and comprehensive overview of all Council working groups that operate in the fields of the CCP and Economic Cooperation, including information on Committees and similar working groups that act under the terms of international agreements, and including information about their mandate and their activity (frequency of meetings and participants, activity in the run-up to a new legally-binding act or agreement as well as with regard to the implementation of legally binding acts and agreements).

Secondly, I would like to suggest a close cooperation between our institutions with regard to the preparation, negotiation and monitoring of international trade agreements. The Lisbon Treaty establishes a legally binding obligation for the Commission to keep Parliament regularly informed on on-going negotiations, with the same degree of information that it provides to the special committee appointed by the Council. As all international trade agreements now always require the EP's consent (in the past, the COM negotiated trade agreements and decided only at a later stage about the exact legal basis and, as a consequence, Parliament's involvement), the role of the CTP as well as the interest of the EP in gathering information about the CTP change. Whereas we have so far focussed on what the 133 Committee has been dealing with, we will now move on to a more ex-ante focus on what the CTP will deal with.

That is why I would like to suggest direct access of the Parliament, at senior staff and political group agent level, to the meetings of the CTP. Moreover, I would like to propose that we agree to hold, at the beginning of each rotating Council Presidency, a meeting of the INTA Chair and Coordinators with the Chair of COREPER II, following the established practice of the Chair of COREPER I with Parliament's committees. These meetings should aim at a joint screening, planning and preparation exercise with regard to pending dossiers and new initiatives in international trade.

I appreciate your reaction to my ideas and stand ready to answer any questions or provide any further details as needed.

Yours sincerely



Vital Moreira

cc: Secretary General of the Council, Mr Jerzy Buzek, Mr Klaus-Heiner Lehne, Mr Klaus Welle, Ms Sarah Blau, Mr Christian Mangold