



EUROPEAN UNION COMMITTEE
Sub-Committee A (Economic and Financial Affairs
And International Trade)

Inquiry into European Trade Policy

Call for Evidence

Multilateral negotiations to reduce trade tariffs have been a feature of the second half of the twentieth century. However as we enter the twenty first century, securing a new multilateral agreement has proved increasingly difficult, and the number of bilateral agreements is rising. Levels of trade and capital flows continue to grow, and enhancements in information technology have created unprecedented opportunities for trade development, alongside new pressures on natural resources. With these factors in mind, the Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of Baroness Cohen of Pimlico, has decided to commence an inquiry into the future of European trade policy.

The inquiry will seek to answer the following key questions:

1. What are the future prospects for multilateral trade negotiations? What effect will the rising number of bilateral agreements have on the existence and further development of multilateral agreements?
2. What role can European trade policy play to stimulate growth and create jobs in Europe?
3. What should be the relationship between European trade policy and policies on development, climate change and depletion of natural resources?
4. Have developing countries benefited from multilateral trade agreements? What steps should European trade policy take to help less developed countries reap the benefits of global trade?
5. Is there still a need for Trade Defence Instruments, and if so, how can these be designed to ensure that their effects are targeted and proportionate?
6. What is the best approach for ensuring that Intellectual Property Rights are protected? Do these rights hinder development goals – and if so, how can an appropriate balance be struck?
7. Services represent 77% of European GDP and employment. What are the best mechanisms to remove barriers to trade in services? Is the GATS still fit for purpose?
8. Is there still a role for the WTO in the 21st Century?

GUIDANCE TO THOSE SUBMITTING WRITTEN EVIDENCE

Written evidence is invited in response to the questions above, to arrive no later than Friday 29 February 2008.

Evidence should be submitted in hard copy and electronically to Simon Blackburn, Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW; fax 020 7219 6715; e-mail blackburns@parliament.uk.

Short submissions are preferred. A submission longer than six pages should include a one-page summary.

Evidence must be clearly printed or typed on single sides of A4 paper, unstapled. Paragraphs should be numbered. If drawings or charts are included, these must be black-and-white and of camera-ready quality. Evidence should be signed and dated, with a note of the author's name and status, and of whether the evidence is submitted on an individual or corporate basis. Only one copy is required. All submissions will be acknowledged promptly.

Evidence becomes the property of the Committee, and may be published or circulated by the Committee at any stage. Once you have received acknowledgement that the evidence has been received, you may publicise or publish your evidence yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee.

Persons who submit written evidence, and others, may be invited to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster, and transcripts are published. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

You may follow the progress of the inquiry from the Weekly Bulletin of House of Lords Select Committees. This is free, and may be ordered from Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW, telephone 020 7219 6678. Alternatively, consult the UK Parliament website at <http://www.parliament.uk/selectcommittees>.

This is a public call for evidence. You are encouraged to bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy directly.