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Member of the European Parliament D66/ALDE

United States Congress
The Capitol
East Capitol St NE & First St SE,
Washington, DC 20004
United States of America

Brussels, February 22nd 2018

Dear Members of Congress,

Following up a visit to Washington this week, we would like to share the following concern about trade. The US and the EU share an interest in a strong, rules-based system to ensure trade practices are fair. The need to work together to address unfair trade by China was underscored in talks in Washington once more.

Over the past months we have grown increasingly worried about the US administration's lack of appointment of judges to the WTO's appellate body. This effectively challenges the WTO's work.

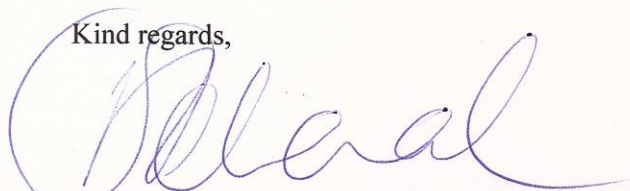
As its highest dispute settlement authority, the appellate body is an essential part of the WTO. The European Union remains strongly committed to dispute settlement through adjudication, one of the main pillars of the multilateral trading system that we have been developing together for over 20 years.

The appellate body is usually composed of seven judges and needs at least four to function. Its membership has shrunk when the term of judge van den Bossche expired last December. The term of a fourth judge is set to expire by September this year. If no (re)appointments are made in time, the appellate body will no longer be able to hear appeals.

Both the European Union and a coalition of Latin American countries have submitted proposals to start a selection process to fill the current vacancies. The Trump administration continues to reject these proposals, citing problems with the functioning of the appellate body itself.

We in Europe stand ready to discuss your ideas on improving the WTO dispute settlement system. Yet we press upon you that the continued blocking of appointments to the WTO appellate body only further compromises the functioning of that very trade system that should help us address unfair trade practices such as by China.

Kind regards,



Marietje Schaake, Vice-President of the European Parliament's Transatlantic Legislative Dialogue (ALDE)

Member of the European Parliament

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