

Proposal for Skopje Spring Congress 2020

Proposal
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LYMEC Spring Congress, April 3 to 5, 2020 in Skopje

Author: Joventut Nacionalista de Catalunya (JNC), JUNOS, Radikal Ungdom, Junge Liberale, JOVD

Status: accepted rejected transferred to _____

The Skopje Spring Congress 2020 may decide:

1 **Defending a multilateral and liberal model of international** 2 **commerce**

3 Considering that:

- 4 • The agreements of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are legal documents that cover
5 all kinds of economic activities: agriculture, public bonds, banking, telecommunications,
6 industrial standards and consumer safety, intellectual property, etc. But all those
7 documents are governed by a few fundamental principles that are the base of the current
8 system of multilateral commerce. Those are: the most-favoured-nation (MFN), that of
9 national treatment, that of free commerce, that of predictability – through compromise and
10 transparency –, and that of free competition and of development and economic reform
11 promotion.
- 12 • The WTO has been key to the liberalisation of commerce since 1995 and economic
13 prosperity through the process of globalisation and global integration that the world has
14 seen, of which the United States had always been a fervent advocate, against the
15 protectionist practices of countries such as China or Russia. Nonetheless, President
16 Trump has initiated a trade war that could potentially have a dangerous outcome not only
17 in terms of global growth, but also of norms and diplomacy, normalizing the fact that trade
18 disputes do not get resolved at the negotiating table but instead are escalated through
19 threats, custom increases and protectionism.

20 Noting that:

- 21 • On the one hand, Trump justifies that he wants China to obey the terms of free commerce
22 that it has agreed to follow but, on the other, it acts in a totally different fashion, publicly
23 criticising the WTO and repeatedly threatening to pull the US out of it".The American
24 administration has failed in promoting reforms that could have allowed for a better
25 functioning of this institution: it has blocked the designation of WTO judges, which the
26 organisation urgently needs; it has refused to even consider the proposed reforms in
27 international forums; and it has neither proposed alternative reforms. This means that it is
28 not only undermining the well-functioning of the WTO, but that western liberal countries
29 can no longer hold China accountable when it does not obey the agreed commercial
30 terms, thus diminishing the global legitimacy that those enjoyed;

31 • Trump has entered into a victimist rhetoric saying that countries such as China have been
32 abusing WTO, using its norms to receive special treatment and creating unfair
33 disadvantages in front of American companies that “play following the rules of the game”
34 and creating an unequal playing field without any accountability. However, stating that the
35 WTO is “the worst trade agreement ever reached” will not solve anything. On the
36 contrary, the WTO must not be used as a political weapon, since using its dispute
37 resolution mechanism (WTODS) as a forum to discuss international affairs, not strictly
38 related to trade, goes against the reason of being of the same organisation, since in the
39 end it’s purpose is to move beyond contingent political interests and turbulences,
40 whether a trade demand from a particular country is legitimate or not.

41 LYMEC:

- 42 • Demands liberal countries to cooperate to prevent a further erosion of the liberal trade
43 regime after Trump and to propose profound reforms and legal solutions to end with trade
44 wars through a new multilateral and stable trade agreement;
- 45 • Condemns the victimist rhetoric of President Trump, since it does not bring any real
46 solution and undermines the legitimacy, the proper functioning and the multilateral trust
47 within the liberal trade regime;
- 48 • Refuse that a trade war be the solution to the challenges that China is posing to the
49 established international order or the right tool to prevent China from building an
50 alternative trade regime based on non-liberal trading values;
- 51 • Ask that the government of the US stop blocking the resolution of trade disputes, as well
52 as the designation of new WTO judges, since this prevents the effective functioning of the
53 organisation and goes against its reason of being;
- 54 • Demand that trade disagreements are resolved within the multilateral liberal regime in a
55 systematic, definitive and fair way, because this is the only actual existent legitimate
56 mechanism;
- 57 • The LYMEC Bureau to forward this resolution to the ALDE Party and to the ALDE
58 Council;
- 59 • The LYMEC member organisations and member contacts in the EU member states and
60 applicant states to pressure their mother parties and other politicians to achieve the aims
61 of this resolution.

Attention: This is a preview! The official text is printed in the proposal book for Skopje Spring Congress 2020 03 - 05 April 2020.