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Article V

Economic Integration

1. This Agreement shall not prevent any of its Members from being a party to or entering into an agreement liberalizing trade in services between or among the parties to such an agreement, provided that such an agreement:

- (a) has substantial sectoral coverage,¹ and

*(footnote original)*¹ This condition is understood in terms of number of sectors, volume of trade affected and modes of supply. In order to meet this condition, agreements should not provide for the a priori exclusion of any mode of supply.

(b) provides for the absence or elimination of substantially all discrimination, in the sense of Article XVII, between or among the parties, in the sectors covered under subparagraph (a), through:

- (i) elimination of existing discriminatory measures, and/or
- (ii) prohibition of new or more discriminatory measures, either at the entry into force of that agreement or on the basis of a reasonable time-frame, except for measures permitted under Articles XI, XII, XIV and XIV bis.

2. In evaluating whether the conditions under paragraph 1(b) are met, consideration may be given to the relationship of the agreement to a wider process of economic integration or trade liberalization among the countries concerned.

3. (a) Where developing countries are parties to an agreement of the type referred to in paragraph 1, flexibility shall be provided for regarding the conditions set out in paragraph 1, particularly with reference to subparagraph (b) thereof, in accordance with the level of development of the countries concerned, both overall and in individual sectors and subsectors.

(b) Notwithstanding paragraph 6, in the case of an agreement of the type referred to in paragraph 1 involving only developing countries, more favourable treatment may be granted to juridical persons owned or controlled by natural persons of the parties to such an agreement.

4. Any agreement referred to in paragraph 1 shall be designed to facilitate trade between the parties to the agreement and shall not in respect of any Member outside the agreement raise the overall level of barriers to trade in services within the respective sectors or subsectors compared to the level applicable prior to such an agreement.

5. If, in the conclusion, enlargement or any significant modification of any agreement under paragraph 1, a Member intends to withdraw or modify a specific commitment inconsistently with the terms and conditions set out in its Schedule, it shall provide at least 90 days advance notice of such modification or withdrawal and the procedure set forth in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Article XXI shall apply.

6. A service supplier of any other Member that is a juridical person constituted under the laws of a party to an agreement referred to in paragraph 1 shall be entitled to treatment

granted under such agreement, provided that it engages in substantive business operations in the territory of the parties to such agreement.

7. (a) Members which are parties to any agreement referred to in paragraph 1 shall promptly notify any such agreement and any enlargement or any significant modification of that agreement to the Council for Trade in Services. They shall also make available to the Council such relevant information as may be requested by it. The Council may establish a working party to examine such an agreement or enlargement or modification of that agreement and to report to the Council on its consistency with this Article.

(b) Members which are parties to any agreement referred to in paragraph 1 which is implemented on the basis of a time-frame shall report periodically to the Council for Trade in Services on its implementation. The Council may establish a working party to examine such reports if it deems such a working party necessary.

(c) Based on the reports of the working parties referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b), the Council may make recommendations to the parties as it deems appropriate.

8. A Member which is a party to any agreement referred to in paragraph 1 may not seek compensation for trade benefits that may accrue to any other Member from such agreement.

1.2 Article V:1

1. The Panel in *Canada – Autos*, in a finding subsequently not addressed by the Appellate Body, considered that, with respect to an import duty exemption available to only a limited number of firms, Canada could not claim an exemption from its MFN obligation under Article II by invoking Article V:1. The Panel noted that the Canadian measures at issue did not grant more favourable treatment to *all* services and service suppliers of members of NAFTA:

"Even assuming that the [Canadian measures at issue] could be brought within the scope of the services liberalization provisions of NAFTA, we note that the import duty exemption under the [measures at issue] is accorded to a small number of manufacturers/wholesalers of the United States to the exclusion of all other manufacturers/wholesalers of the United States and of Mexico. The [measures at issue], therefore, provide more favourable treatment to only some and not all services and service suppliers of Members of NAFTA, while, according to Article V:1(b), an economic integration agreement has to provide for 'the absence or elimination of substantially all discrimination, in the sense of Article XVII', in order to be eligible for the exemption from Article II of the GATS.

Although the requirement of Article V:1(b) is to provide non-discrimination in the sense of Article XVII (National Treatment), we consider that once it is fulfilled it would also ensure non-discrimination between all service suppliers of other parties to the economic integration agreement. It is our view that the object and purpose of this provision is to eliminate all discrimination among services and service suppliers of parties to an economic integration agreement, including discrimination between suppliers of other parties to an economic integration agreement. In other words, it would be inconsistent with this provision if a party to an economic integration agreement were to extend more favourable treatment to service suppliers of one party than that which it extended to service suppliers of another party to that agreement.

Moreover, it is worth recalling that Article V provides legal coverage for measures taken pursuant to economic integration agreements, which would otherwise be inconsistent with the MFN obligation in Article II. Paragraph 1 of Article V refers to 'an agreement liberalizing trade in services'. Such economic integration agreements typically aim at achieving higher levels of liberalization between or among their parties than that achieved among WTO Members. Article V:1 further prescribes a certain minimum level of liberalization which such agreements must attain in order to qualify for the exemption from the general MFN obligation of Article II. In this respect, the purpose of Article V is to allow for ambitious

liberalization to take place at a regional level, while at the same time guarding against undermining the MFN obligation by engaging in minor preferential arrangements. However, in our view, it is not within the object and purpose of Article V to provide legal coverage for the extension of more favourable treatment only to a few service suppliers of parties to an economic integration agreement on a selective basis, even in situations where the maintenance of such measures may explicitly be provided for in the agreement itself."¹

Current as of: December 2024

¹ Panel Report, *Canada – Autos*, paras. 10.269-10.271.