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1 ARTICLE VII OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TRADE IN SERVICES

1.1 Text of Article VII

Article VII

Recognition

1. For the purposes of the fulfilment, in whole or in part, of its standards or criteria for the authorization, licensing or certification of services suppliers, and subject to the requirements of paragraph 3, a Member may recognize the education or experience obtained, requirements met, or licenses or certifications granted in a particular country. Such recognition, which may be achieved through harmonization or otherwise, may be based upon an agreement or arrangement with the country concerned or may be accorded autonomously.

2. A Member that is a party to an agreement or arrangement of the type referred to in paragraph 1, whether existing or future, shall afford adequate opportunity for other interested Members to negotiate their accession to such an agreement or arrangement or to negotiate comparable ones with it. Where a Member accords recognition autonomously, it shall afford adequate opportunity for any other Member to demonstrate that education, experience, licenses, or certifications obtained or requirements met in that other Member's territory should be recognized.

3. A Member shall not accord recognition in a manner which would constitute a means of discrimination between countries in the application of its standards or criteria for the authorization, licensing or certification of services suppliers, or a disguised restriction on trade in services.

4. Each Member shall:

- (a) within 12 months from the date on which the WTO Agreement takes effect for it, inform the Council for Trade in Services of its existing recognition measures and state whether such measures are based on agreements or arrangements of the type referred to in paragraph 1;
- (b) promptly inform the Council for Trade in Services as far in advance as possible of the opening of negotiations on an agreement or arrangement of the type referred to in paragraph 1 in order to provide adequate opportunity to any other Member to indicate their interest in participating in the negotiations before they enter a substantive phase;
- (c) promptly inform the Council for Trade in Services when it adopts new recognition measures or significantly modifies existing ones and state whether the measures are based on an agreement or arrangement of the type referred to in paragraph 1.

5. Wherever appropriate, recognition should be based on multilaterally agreed criteria. In appropriate cases, Members shall work in cooperation with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations towards the establishment and adoption of common

international standards and criteria for recognition and common international standards for the practice of relevant services trades and professions.

1.2 General

1.2.1 Electronic commerce

1. With respect to the application of Article VII to electronic commerce, see the Progress Report adopted by the Council for Trade in Services in the context of the Work Programme on Electronic Commerce on 19 July 1999.¹

1.2.2 Financial Services

2. Paragraph 3 of the Annex on Financial Services relates to recognition in the area of financial services.

1.3 Article VII:4 Format for notifications

3. With respect to the format for notifications under paragraph 4, see the Guidelines for Notifications under the General Agreement on Trade in Services.²

1.4 Article VII:5 Guidelines for Mutual Recognition Agreements or Arrangements in the Accountancy Sector

4. On 29 May 1997, the Council for Trade in Services approved the voluntary Guidelines for Mutual Recognition Agreements or Arrangements in the Accountancy Sector.³

Current as of: June 2024

¹ [S/L/74](#), para. 11.

² [S/L/5](#).

³ [S/C/M/19](#), paras. 4-7. The text of the approved Guidelines can be found in [S/L/38](#).