

EIGHT CHINA ROUND TABLE ON WTO ACCESSIONS

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Session 3: WTO Accessions – State of Play

Ambassador Atanas Paparizov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the WTO, Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the WTO

Dear Mika,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me first of all to express my gratitude to the Accessions Division of the WTO, to the Ministry of Commerce of China and to the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation for organizing this accession roundtable in the context of the forthcoming Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the WTO.

I am confident that this discussion will help mobilize further the efforts of the acceding governments to overcome the last hurdles in the accession process. This is particularly valid for the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Since my appointment by the General Council in November 2017 as the forth chairperson of the WP I have witnessed, especially during my visit to Sarajevo in January 2018, the high-level commitment of the Government and the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina to WTO accession and the dedicated work at technical level. I would like in particular to commend the team led by Mr. Hamdo Tinjak for the hard work in advancing the accession negotiations during the last two years.

A solid progress was made following the enactment of the Law on Internal Trade in October 2017. This includes:

- Conclusion of bilateral market access negotiations with three Members (Brazil, United States and Ukraine) in 2018;
- Approval of the draft ITA Schedule by the ITA Committee at the end of October 2019;
- Significant advancement in updating the draft Report of the Working Party towards its finalization, following the submission of replies to Members' questions (mainly from the US) the after the last 13th meeting of the Working Party held in February 2018.

However, there exists one issue which is blocking further progress towards conclusion of the accession negotiations, i.e., adoption of the regulation on labelling of oil products.

I hope that now when Bosnia and Herzegovina has a new government this issue will be finalized and will open the way for concluding its remaining bilateral market access negotiations with one member state.

I would like to stress that the conclusion of the accession process is technically doable by the next Ministerial Conference in June 2020 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Based on my interactions with WTO Members, good will exists among them to conclude the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the coming months, if the Government is ready to take the necessary steps. In particular, Members are keen to see the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina as one of the potential deliverables for the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12).

I am ready and available, as Chairman, to help Bosnia and Herzegovina cross the finishing line of this accession in the next few months, with the assistance of, and in coordination with WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo. Evidence has shown that the longer one waits, the higher the price of entering the Organization.

Thank you for your attention!