



WTO OMC

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30 November 2012

# WTO Accessions Newsletter

The 10<sup>th</sup> and final meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2012 took place today, 30 November. At this meeting, Ambassador D'Alotto (Argentina), Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Algeria briefed the IGA on his recent visit to Algeria. In the second part of today's meeting, the Director of the Accessions Division briefed the IGA on: (i) the 2012 accession priorities; (ii) accession maintenance work and prospects for 2013; (iii) technical assistance and outreach; and (iv) other business - WTO accessions newsletter, 2012 DG Annual Report, databases, etc. The Secretariat also consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings until the end of the calendar year and the first quarter of 2013 (as annexed).

## Working Party Chairperson Visit

The Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Algeria, Ambassador D'Alotto (Argentina), briefed Members on his recent visit to the Acceding Government, where he met with key stake holders. These meetings confirmed that there was "real political motivation" to re-launch Algeria's accession negotiations. Members welcomed this transparency exercise.

## 2012 Accession Results

Lao PDR: The General Council formally adopted Lao PDR's Accession Package on 26 October 2012. The Director of the Accessions Division undertook a mission to Vientiane from 2 to 5 November. The Prime Minister of Lao PDR conveyed his appreciation to the WTO Membership for the support throughout Lao PDR's accession process. The Government confirmed that the National Assembly would ratify the Accession Package at its 4 December Session. Lao PDR underscored its policy priority to exit the LDC-category by 2020, and was hopeful for the WTO Membership's support. The IGA was also informed that DDG Rugwabiza was currently in Vientiane for post-accession TA to explain the benefits and obligations of WTO Membership to Parliamentarians.



13<sup>th</sup> Asia-Business Forum, Vientiane, 4 November 2012

Tajikistan: A special session of the General Council will take place in the afternoon of 10 December, to formally adopt Tajikistan's Accession Package. At the invitation of Tajikistan, the Director of the Accessions Division and the Secretary of the Working Party visited Dushanbe from 19 to 22 November. At this visit, President Rahmon, on behalf of the Government, expressed his appreciation to the WTO Membership for the support in adopting *ad referendum* Tajikistan's Accession Package by consensus, at the final Working Party meeting on 26 October 2012.



Meeting with President Rahmon, Dushanbe, 20 November 2012

## 2012 Accession Priorities

Yemen: The IGA was informed that Yemen had forwarded a revised goods offer to Ukraine through the Facilitators on 21 November. The technical verification process remained work in progress under the Facilitators. This 2012 Accession Priority has been transferred to 2013.

Kazakhstan: All the relevant inputs for the next cycle of meetings, starting in the week of 3 December, were circulated, including the revised draft Working Party Report. Due to its technical complexity, this 2012 Accession Priority would be carried over as a priority for 2013.

Serbia: Serbian State Secretary, Mr. Stevan Nikčević will visit Geneva in December. One of the objectives of his visit is to discuss Serbia's accession process to the WTO. Pending relevant legislative feedback from Belgrade, this 2012 Accession Priority has been transferred to 2013. Panama confirmed to the IGA that it had concluded its bilateral negotiations with Serbia.

## Accessions Maintenance Work

The IGA was briefed on the progress in six other active accessions (Afghanistan; Algeria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Seychelles). On Belarus, the IGA was informed that the Secretariat had circulated the revised Factual Summary and the economic country reports by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Members welcomed the revised Factual Summary. While the specific timing for the next meeting was explored, some Members underscored the need to examine the new documentation carefully before considering next steps. They also requested updates on legislation. Consultations on the vacant Chairmanship were underway. On Bosnia and Herzegovina, the IGA was informed that at the last Working Party meeting on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this accession has emerged as a 2013 accession priority. This prospect was attributed to the considerable progress registered in 2012 and the technical maturity of the dossier. On Afghanistan, this LDC accession has also emerged as a 2013 Accession Priority. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Working Party meeting will be held on 7 December.

## Technical Assistance and Outreach

The 2012 annual outreach cycle on accessions by the Director of the Accessions Division will be concluded with the briefing at Geneva Week, scheduled on 12 December. Not only had Members been briefed for transparency purposes, they had also been invited to discuss their concerns and ask questions. Members should be confident that their business on accessions had been conducted professionally, transparently and with concrete results. A module on WTO Accessions would be delivered at the Regional Trade Policy Course for Arab countries in Kuwait, on 12-13 December 2012.

## 2012 Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions

The IGA was informed that the 4th Annual Report on Accessions by Director-General Pascal Lamy would be introduced at the December Session of the General Council (11-12 December).

## WTO Accessions Newsletter

The IGA was also informed that this Newsletter was now also accessible *via* the accessions-section on the WTO website.

## Evolving Calendar of WTO Accessions Working Parties

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					French Spanish English	Own
Friday, 30 November 2012	IGA	10 <sup>th</sup> Informal Group on Accessions	Fax dated 23/11/12 refers (AM)	S2	NO	NO
Wednesday, 5 December 2012	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture	Fax dated 28/11/12 refers (PM)	S2	NO	TBC
Thursday, 6 December 2012	Azerbaijan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture	Fax dated 22/11/12 refers (PM)	S3	NO	YES
Friday, 7 December 2012	Afghanistan	3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party	WTO/AIR/4056 dated 26/11/2012 refers (AM)	S1	YES	NO
Friday, 7 December 2012	Azerbaijan	10 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	WTO/AIR/4051 dated 19/11/2012 refers (PM)	S1	YES	YES
<b>From Monday, 10 to Friday, 14 December – Second Geneva Week</b>						
<b>Monday, 10 December (pm only) – General Council – Accession of Tajikistan – Report of the Working Party</b>						
<b>Tuesday, 11 to Wednesday, 12 December – General Council</b>						
Monday, 10 December 2012	Kazakhstan	14 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	WTO/AIR/4060 dated 27/11/2012 refers (AM Only)	S1	YES	TBC
[Tuesday, 11 December 2012]	Kazakhstan	Goods Schedule Technical Verification	Convening Notice Pending (AM)	S2	YES	TBC
Wednesday, 12 December 2012	Geneva Week	State of Play on Accessions	from 16h to 17h	TBC	YES	TBC

<b>2013</b>						
[End of First Quarter 2013]	Serbia	13 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	TBC	YES	NO
[First Quarter 2013]	Belarus	Informal/Formal WP Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	TBC	NO	NO
[First Quarter 2013]	Algeria	Informal/Formal WP Meeting	Convening Notice Pending	TBC	YES	NO
[First Quarter 2013]	The Bahamas	3 <sup>rd</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	TBC	YES	NO
[First Quarter 2013]	Ethiopia	4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	TBC	YES	NO
[First Quarter 2013]	The Seychelles	4 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	TBC	YES	NO
[First/Second Quarter 2013]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	11 <sup>th</sup> Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	TBC	YES	NO

Dates are suggested to assist planning by Members, Acceding Governments and the Secretariat. However, listed meetings are not automatic and will only go ahead on the basis of inputs from Acceding Governments, received with sufficient time for review by Members, normally a period of 4 weeks.

Enquiries related to this calendar should be addressed to:

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For all enquiries related to the contents of the WTO Accessions Newsletter, please contact Ms Petra Beslać ([Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org](mailto:Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org); Tel: +41 22 739 60 94; and Fax: +41 22 739 57 76).