



WTO Accessions Newsletter

...safeguarding and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system

IGA-AGENDA:

The 6th meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2013 took place today, 24 June. The IGA was briefed on: (i) the overall pace of accessions in technical focus for 2013; (ii) accession WP maintenance work; and, (iii) outreach and technical assistance. The WTO Secretariat consulted Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2013 (annexed).

OVERALL PACE OF ACCESSIONS

The 6th meeting of the IGA was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division. He noted that some accessions were on pace, and required only 'tying up', whilst questions remained on others. Accessions formed part of the regular work of the WTO and concluding them was largely substance-driven, although calendars and process, were necessary to manage them.

2013 ACCESSION WP FOCUS

Yemen: The IGA was informed that there were no outstanding issues and that this accession was basically done. The signing of the Bilateral Agreement between Ukraine and Yemen would be scheduled back-to-back with the final Working Party meeting. The Consolidated Draft Goods Schedule would be circulated by the Secretariat once it has been signed and duly deposited. A final Working Party meeting should take place shortly. It was confirmed that the Secretariat would take into account Members' calendar commitments in the scheduling of WP Meetings.

Afghanistan: Kabul was committed to completing its accession. On the multilateral front, the Draft Working Party Report had been updated and was rapidly maturing. A stand-alone document containing the draft specific commitment paragraphs had been initiated and developed by the Afghan negotiating team and would be circulated, along with the DWPR, later today. Work was under way on the Legislative Action Plan. On the bilateral front, negotiations with most Members were close to completion. The Afghan delegation would be arriving in Geneva in a few weeks and remained committed to concluding all bilateral negotiations before the Summer Break.



12th Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Geneva, 6 June 2013

ACCESSIONS - TOOLBOX

> Click here for a list of current [Accession Working Parties](#) and [Accession Working Party Chairpersons](#)

> Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM)

> [WTO Director-General Annual Reports on Accessions](#)

> Find all Article XII Members' specific accession commitments and related information provided in the Working Party Reports and Accession Protocols - in the [Accession Commitments Database \(ACDB\)](#)

> [Handbook on Accessions to the WTO](#)

> WTO Accessions Internship - "[China Programme](#)"

> For all official (de-restricted) documents relating to the accession processes of Article XII Members, click [here](#)

> Accession Portal on the WTO Website ([En](#), [Fr](#), [Es](#))

> All earlier [WTO Accessions Newsletters](#) are available on the Accession Portal of the WTO website, in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).

> For enquiries related to the contents of the WTO Accessions Newsletter, send an e-mail to: Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Overall, this accession was on track. A few outstanding issues remained to be resolved, namely the timing of the commitment for the *de minimis* level; trading rights; and legal-scrubbing issues. Progress had been reported on the bilateral front and negotiations were virtually concluded. As part of the endgame activities, a Secretariat team, led by the WP Chairman, would be in Sarajevo from 26-28 June.

Kazakhstan: The last cycle of meetings took place between 4-5 June. Updated AGSTs had been submitted with a new base period. Outstanding questions were still being addressed. On the multilateral level, the Draft Working Party Report had been further stabilized but outstanding technical work remained in several areas of the foreign trade regime and the SPS section lagged behind. Evolving regulatory developments at the CU level required precise description and reflection, including in commitments in the Draft Working Party Report. Serious technical work was under way to review and address these issues and advance on the tariff adjustment exercise. The Consolidated Draft Services Schedule was being reviewed by Astana, and would be circulated following technical verification by relevant Signatory Members. Depending on the timely receipt of inputs, the next cycle of meetings was envisaged for the week of 22 July.

Serbia: This accession was technically complete, subject to Belgrade's enactment of WTO-consistent legislation and the conclusion of outstanding bilateral negotiations.

Seychelles: The last cycle of meetings took place on 21 June. Seychelles reiterated its commitment to concluding its accession in 2013. Momentum had been generated although outstanding technical work remained in several areas of the Draft text of the Working Party Report. Members reaffirmed their support for the conclusion of this accession as soon as possible. An area of progress was the commitment by Seychelles to bind its export subsidies at zero upon accession. A Secretariat technical assistance mission, led by Ms Hilda Al-Hinai, WP Chairwoman, was scheduled for end July to provide capacity-building and to review and upgrade the Elements of the Draft Working Party Report to a Draft Working Party Report. Seychelles had reported the conclusion of its bilateral market access negotiation with South Africa.



Minister Pierre Laporte at the 4th Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Seychelles, Geneva, 21 June 2013

MAINTENANCE WORK

The IGA was briefed on the progress in 3 other active accessions:

On Algeria, a Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture would take place on 3 July.

On Azerbaijan, revised AGSTs were circulated on 21 June.

On Belarus, Minsk was currently in the process of preparing a comprehensive, updated Legislative Action Plan, with the assistance of the Secretariat. Following the receipt of questions and comments from Members, Minsk would start preparing relevant replies, which would be used to update the Factual Summary.

OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A briefing for, and dialogue with, the Informal Group of Developing Countries was scheduled for 25 June. The Asian Group of Developing Countries would be briefed on 15 July. Another Dialogue would be held with the LDCs' Consultative Group.

A Global technical assistance activity and the 2nd China Roundtable for LDCs and Article XII Members have been scheduled for after the Summer Break. A separate dedicated message would be circulated to IGA Members in July with full information.

The Director of the Accessions Division conveyed the appreciation of the Secretariat to all Members for their technical assistance, support and guidance provided across all WTO accession processes.

FIRST IGA PARTICIPATION BY MONTENEGRO

The Montenegrin Ambassador Zorica Marić-Djordjević was welcomed to the IGA family, as a recent Article XII Member.

Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings (ECAM)¹

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
Monday, 24 June	IGA	6 th 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	S3	NO	NO
Wednesday, 3 July	Algeria	Plurilateral meeting on Agriculture	Convening Fax dated 17 June 2013 refers	D	EN/FR only	NO
[Friday, 19 July]	IGA	7 th 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	S3	NO	NO
[Monday, 22 July]	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on SPS (AM)	Convening Notice pending	S1	NO	TBC
		Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (PM)	Convening Notice pending	S1	NO	TBC
[Tuesday, 23 July]	Kazakhstan	17 th Working Party Meeting (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	S1	YES	TBC
[Thursday, 25 July]	Afghanistan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (AM)	Convening Notice pending	S1	NO	TBC
		4 th Working Party meeting (PM)	Convening Notice pending	S1	YES	NO
[24 - 25 July]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[July]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Informal/Formal WP meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[July]	Yemen	11 th and final Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO

¹ 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 at least four weeks.

Scheduling and confirmation of meetings also take account of the distribution of meetings in any particular period, and hence, the capacity of Members and the Secretariat alike to cope.

EVOLVING POST-SUMMER BREAK SCHEDULE²

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
5 - 6 September	WTO OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS					
23 - 27 September	2013 Accessions TA Activity Theme: "The Present and the Future of the Rules-Based Trading System: Contributions of WTO Accessions" – Part I: GLOBAL SEMINAR ON WTO ACCESSIONS (GENEVA) "...safeguarding and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system..."					
[Tuesday, 24 September]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	13 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Thursday, 26 September]	Seychelles	5 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 - 3 October]	WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2013					
[Week of 7 October]	Afghanistan	5 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[8 - 9 October]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[15-18 October 2013]	2013 Accessions TA Activity Theme: "The Present and the Future of the Rules-Based Trading System: Contributions of WTO Accessions" – Part II: SECOND CHINA PROGRAMME ROUNDTABLE FOR LDCs (LUANG PRABANG, Lao PDR) "The Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Perspectives of LDCs and Article XII Members"					
[2 nd half of 2013]	Azerbaijan	11 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd half of 2013]	The Bahamas	3 rd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd half of 2013]	Ethiopia	4 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd half of 2013]	Iraq	3 rd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd half of 2013]	Liberia	2 nd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[5 - 6 November]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[3 - 6 December]	NINTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC9) - BALI					

Note:

Enquiries related to this calendar should be addressed to:

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² WTO Official Holidays, including Jeûne Genevois