



WTO Accessions Newsletter

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

IGA-AGENDA:

The 9th and final meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2013 took place today, 8 November. The meeting was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division, Mr Chiedu Osakwe. The IGA was briefed on: (i) the 5th Director-General's Annual Report; (ii) the overall pace of accessions in technical focus for 2013; (iii) accession WP maintenance work; and, (iv) outreach and technical assistance. The WTO Secretariat consulted Members on the ECAM: Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2013-2014 (annexed).

2013 DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT

Members were reminded that the Director-General's 2013 Annual Report on Accessions had been circulated on 1 November 2013. The Director-General, Roberto Azevêdo, had conveyed his appreciation to Members for their contributions on accessions in the year under review, which had advanced several Working Parties, including the accession of Yemen, which had been concluded. The DG would introduce his Annual Report at the 21 November General Council (GC) and had invited the views and comments of Members, with suggestions for future improvements.

2013 ACCESSION WP FOCUS

Yemen: The Accession Package of Yemen had been adopted, *ad referendum*, at the 11th and final meeting of the Working Party on 26 September 2013. The Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Yemen had been forwarded for formal action by Ministers at MC9.

Afghanistan: The accession of Afghanistan had been significantly advanced in 2013. Progress made would be built on in 2014. On the multilateral front, the Draft Working Party Report (DWPR) was moving in the right direction. The documents, including the revised Legislative Action Plan (LAP) had been circulated to Members on 31 October 2013. On the bilateral front, most bilateral market access negotiations had been concluded, and Members stood ready to conclude the remaining few in the next round of bilateral negotiations. To facilitate this, Deputy Minister H.E Mozammil Shinwari would be in Geneva between 10-20 November 2013. The next cycle of meetings would be in the 1st quarter of 2014.

The IGA bade farewell to the principal negotiator, Mr Safir Sahar and Ms Lidet Kebede, Secretary of the Working Party on the Accession of Afghanistan, for the outstanding contributions they had made in moving this accession forward.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: This accession was advancing to its final stages. Members stood ready to help this accession over the finishing line. Multilaterally, the DWPR only had a few commitment paragraphs to be finalised in the areas of agricultural policies and trading rights.

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](#)"

> [Accession-Related Technical Assistance Activities](#)

> 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

Additional outstanding work included the adoption of 3 pieces of legislation and the submission of an updated LAP. On the bilateral side, most bilateral market access negotiations had been concluded. The ball was in the court of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding decisions that would enable the conclusion of this accession as soon as possible.

Kazakhstan: This accession is at an advanced stage, although complex and unique. The principal challenge revolved around the question of tariff adjustment and associated compensation. In addition, technical work remained in several other areas of the Foreign Trade Regime, including SPS, Agriculture, TRIMs and local content in State Owned Enterprises. On services, Astana was reviewing the Draft Services Schedule in consultation with Signatory Members. A technical verification meeting would be convened by the Secretariat after Kazakhstan resubmits the Draft Services Schedule to the Secretariat. The next cycle of meetings was envisaged for the 1st quarter of 2014. The Secretariat was in regular contact with the negotiating team of Kazakhstan.



Meeting between DDG Shark and Mrs Zhanar Aitzhanova, Minister for Economic Integration of Kazakhstan and Chief Negotiator, Geneva, 7 October 2013

Serbia: This accession is at an advanced stage. Progress towards closure was subject to the enactment of outstanding WTO-consistent GMO legislation and conclusion of outstanding bilateral market access negotiations.

Seychelles: This accession had progressed substantially from initial to intermediate stage in 2013. The Working Party Chairwoman, Ms Hilda Al-Hinai, with the support of Members, was in sustained and constructive engagement with Victoria in advancing this accession. Members, in particular, the EU, had provided focused technical assistance (TA) for capacity building and updating several areas of the Foreign Trade Regime. The EU announced the signing of its bilateral market access agreements on Goods and Services, which had been deposited with the Secretariat. The next Working Party meeting was scheduled for 15 November. This accession would remain in technical focus in 2014.

MAINTENANCE WORK

The IGA was briefed on the progress in 7 other active accessions:

Algeria: Progress had been made in this accession in 2013. The Secretariat had circulated the Q&A document, legislation notices and the Revised Services Offer submitted by Algiers in October 2013. Translations had been undertaken after technical review by the Secretariat in consultation with Algiers for WTO technical conformity. The Secretariat and Algiers were in exchanges regarding required technical improvement on the Revised Goods Offer. After the implementation of the improvements, the Revised Goods Offer would be circulated to Members. Submission of a revised LAP and the Questionnaire on State Trading Enterprises remained outstanding. A WP meeting was envisaged for the 1st quarter of 2014, subject to the timely circulation of documents with adequate time for Members' review.

Azerbaijan: The DWPR had been prepared and updated. It would be circulated to WP Members next week. The next cycle of meetings was envisaged for February 2014.

Comoros: Ambassador Luis Enrique Chávez Basagoitia (Peru) had been designated as the Chairperson of the Working Party on the Accession of Comoros. The Memorandum of Foreign Trade Regime was circulated on 25 October 2013. The deadline for the submission of comments and questions had been set for 31 January 2014.

Belarus: Minsk had submitted key inputs. These had been circulated in September 2013. However, updated documentary inputs were awaited. In addition, several outstanding legislation and the Revised Goods and Services Offers were awaited. The Chairman would consult with Members prior to the next WP meeting on an updated Factual Summary.

Iraq: There was negotiating activity on this accession. Baghdad had signalled interest in negotiating engagement with WP Members. Appreciation was expressed to the US for TA being provided to the negotiating team.

Bahamas: Nassau was reviewing the draft Factual Summary prepared by the Secretariat. The next cycle of meetings was envisaged for the 1st quarter of 2014.

Liberia: Monrovia was undertaking domestic analysis and review of various aspects of its WTO accession. Appreciation was expressed to the EU, including its Member States (Sweden), for TA and support to the Liberian negotiating team.

OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The IGA was briefed on recent accession TA activities. It was also briefed on the Annual Outreach with WTO groups to review specific questions and address concerns and answer questions. The Annual Outreach included contacts with the African Group, the Arab Group, and GRULAC. There was also contact with journalists reporting on trade matters, including WTO Accessions.



*FES Seminar for Journalists from Russia and Kazakhstan,
Geneva, 22 October 2013*

Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings (ECAM)¹

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
Friday, 8 November	IGA	9 th 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Fax dated 29 October 2013 refers	S2	NO	NO
Friday, 15 November	Seychelles	5 th Working Party meeting (AM)	WTO/AIR/4221 dated 23 October 2013 refers	W	YES	NO
[Thursday, 21 November]						
GENERAL COUNCIL						
4 th Quarter 2013 / 1 st Quarter 2014	Bosnia and Herzegovina	13 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[Tuesday, 3 – Friday, 6 December]						
NINTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC9) - BALI						
1st Quarter 2014						
[Friday, 28 February 2014]	Azerbaijan	11 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	D	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Afghanistan	5 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Algeria	12 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	The Bahamas	3 rd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Ethiopia	4 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Kazakhstan	19 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Liberia	2 nd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 st Quarter 2014]	Serbia	14 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO

Note:

Enquiries related to this calendar should be addressed to:

- Ms. Souda Tandara-Stenier (Tel: 022 739 6321; e-mail: Souda.Tandara-Stenier@wto.org);
- Ms. Nadia Ferdi Demierre (Tel: 022 739 6560; e-mail: Nadia.Ferdi@wto.org); or
- accessions@wto.org

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.