



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 2014 took place today, 26 June. The meeting was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division. Members of the IGA were briefed on: (i) developments in LDCs' accessions; (ii) the state-of-play in active non-LDCs' accessions; (iii) accession WPs under "maintenance"; (iv) vacant WP chairmanships; (v) Revision and Update of the "Templates" for the submission of Accession "Negotiating Inputs"; and, (vi) accession-specific technical assistance and outreach. The Secretariat consulted IGA Members on the updated ECAM: Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings for 2014 (annexed).



Accession of Yemen - Ceremony for Deposit of the Instrument of Ratification - 27 May 2014
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

2014 LDCs' ACCESSIONS

The IGA was informed on the accession of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), an area which remained of strategic priority for DG Azevêdo.

Yemen: IGA Members were congratulated on the WTO accession of Yemen. Today, 26 June, Yemen became the 160th WTO Member. Yemen's accession provided another strong and positive signal for the LDC Constituency in the WTO, as Yemen had chosen the path of sound WTO-consistent domestic reforms to pursue economic growth and development. Director-General Azevêdo in his message to the membership underlined that, Yemen's accession "... is great news for Yemen's economy and the People of Yemen".

ACCESSIONS - TOOLBOX

- > Click here for a list of current [Accession Working Parties](#) and [Accession Working Party Chairpersons](#)
- > Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings (ECAM)
- > Secretariat Accessions Team
- > [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

ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES (WP) IN FOCUS

Kazakhstan: This was an accession of huge systemic and commercial significance. At the same time, the negotiations were complex, sensitive, but had now started to move in the right direction. On 13 June, the WP Chairperson Ambassador Vesa Himanen (Finland), had provided an update on the accession's state of play. He re-confirmed that all market access negotiations on goods and services had been completed in 2012. The results of the negotiations had been consolidated by the Secretariat and circulated to signatory Members. The Draft Goods Schedule was being used as the basis for the tariff adjustment exercise. On the rules track, this week, Kazakhstan had submitted significantly updated DWPR inputs. These included the draft Chapter on Agriculture and Answers to Members' Questions. The inputs took account of recent developments related to the Eurasian Economic Union Treaty (EAEU Treaty) concluded and signed by Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation on 29 May. The Secretariat would process the inputs and circulate the respective WP documents in time for the July cycle of WP meetings. Kazakhstan had also confirmed that it would submit an Information Note on the EAEU and an English translation of the Treaty, which would be used as basis for a "Transparency Session" (TS) scheduled for July. The purpose of the TS would be to improve Members' understanding of the ongoing developments in the CU/EAEU and provide an opportunity for Q and A.



Introductory speech by Ms Gulmira Issayeva, Vice-Minister for Agriculture of Kazakhstan - Plurilateral meeting on SPS - 25 June 2014
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

IGA Members were briefed on the open-ended Plurilateral meeting on SPS, on 25 June 2014, chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division. The Delegation of Kazakhstan was led by Ms Gulmira Issayeva, Vice-Minister of Agriculture. The draft SPS chapter lagged behind other sections of the Draft Working Party Report (DWPR) and was yet to be mainstreamed into the main body of the DWPR. The Secretariat reported that, although outstanding work remained, the meeting demonstrated constructive and dynamic engagement of all participants. Technical contributions were made by WP Members, to establish the basis for remaining work. The mood was positive. The substance of the Plurilateral revolved, *inter alia*, around a range of issues encompassing: (i) the vital importance of national standards that are compliant with and adherent to

international standards; (ii) necessity to reflect the relevant factual aspects of the EAEU in the subsequent update of the draft SPS Chapter; (iii) clarity, simplicity and WTO-consistency of measures affecting goods subject to veterinary control; (iv) risk assessment based on scientific evidence with regard to measures, deviating from international standards, and the associated question of the domestic processes for risk assessment; and, (v) finally, the 3 options (audits, guarantees and joint inspections) for approving Export Establishments. Members advised and Kazakhstan accepted that it decides, now, to adopt SPS-related draft resolutions and decisions, under its national competence, in order to accelerate work on the Chapter.

The deadline for Member' submission of written questions was set for 9 July. The next cycle of WP meetings was envisaged for the week of 21 July. It would comprise the Transparency Session on the EAEU; a Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture; the Technical Verification of the Draft Services Schedule with Signatory Members; and, informal and formal meetings of the Working Party. The July Plurilateral meeting on SPS was subject to further confirmation.

At the IGA meeting, Members re-iterated their support for the Accession of Kazakhstan as soon as possible. Several Members expressed their positions on the goods bilaterals. Members were reminded that the WTO was a Member-driven Organization. The message from Director-General Azevêdo was appreciated that the WTO should continue to "deliver results" that safeguarded and strengthened the rules-based system.



Informal Group on Accessions Meeting - 26 June 2014
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)

Seychelles: This accession was maturing, technically, and rapidly advancing to the finishing line. The complete set of documents for the WP meetings had been distributed WP Members on 12 May. The revised DWPR no longer had bracketed language. All WTO-relevant bills had been enacted into law by the Parliament of Seychelles in "one sitting". Associated implementing regulations were being issued and promulgated. An updated Legislative Action Plan (LAP) would be circulated by the Secretariat prior to the next WP meeting in July, to reflect the latest

updates on implementing regulations. Bilateral negotiations were also progressing well. On the ITA, some technical comments had been received. The comments would be reflected. The next cycle of WP meetings was scheduled for 2-3 July. It would comprise a Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture and a formal WP Meeting. Mr. Pierre Laporte, Finance, Trade and Investment Minister would lead the Seychelles Delegation.

Bahamas: Minister Pinder, the Chief Negotiator for WTO Accession of the Bahamas, would visit the WTO in the first week of July and would meet with Director-General Azevêdo.

MAINTENANCE WORK

The Secretariat reported on the technical state-of-play on several active accessions:

Azerbaijan: The Negotiating Team from Baku, led by Deputy Minister Mammad-Guliyev, would be in Geneva from 30 June to 4 July. Members interested in holding bilateral meetings were invited to contact the Azerbaijani Mission.

Iran: IGA Members were informed that the Delegation of Iran had increased its contacts with the Secretariat. The Delegation had requested the Secretariat to appeal to Members to reach a consensus, as early as possible, on the designation of a Chairperson for its Working Party.

Liberia: Domestic preparatory work in Monrovia was progressing rapidly, as follow-up to agreed activities sequel to the letter from President Johnson Sirleaf to Director-General Azevêdo, delivered by Liberia's Chief Negotiator, Commerce and Industry Minister Axel Addy, on 5 May. So far, the Liberian Government had submitted 11 draft laws. The Secretariat had circulated the "Notice of Legislation" on 17 June. Furthermore, Monrovia had intensified its domestic consultations to finalize its initial offer on services and update its initial goods offer.

VACANT WP CHAIRMANSHIPS

Two positions of WP Chairpersons were vacant: Bhutan and Belarus. DDG Shark had been consulting with Members, on behalf of the GC Chairman. Two nominations for the 2 vacancies had been received at the 10 June deadline: (i) Amb. Haluk Ilıcak (Turkey), for Belarus, and (ii) Amb. Thomas Hajnoczi (Austria), for Bhutan. DDG Shark would report to the Director-General and the GC Chairman.

ACCESSION "NEGOTIATING INPUT" TEMPLATES / TECHNICAL NOTES

The WTO Secretariat had largely completed the comprehensive technical review of the templates of Questionnaires, Checklists and Information Notes used by Acceding Governments to submit negotiating inputs to Working Parties. Comments had been received from Member(s). The deadline was extended for Members to provide additional technical comments, if any, to the WTO Secretariat: accessions@wto.org, by 10 July.

Technical work to update one Template remained "outstanding". This was for: "WT/ACC/5 - Information to be provided on Policy Measures Affecting Trade in Services - Technical Note by the Secretariat". The Template was being reviewed by the competent

Division. As soon as this review had been completed, it would be circulated to Members, for a 30-day review period, prior to formal circulation.

OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

IGA Members were informed of the launching of a new E-Course on "Transparency and the WTO: Notification Obligations", in English. Candidates from Members and Observers were eligible to participate. The new course focused on notification obligations, preparation of notifications and usage of online facilities to access the information on notifications through WTO databases. IGA Members were also reminded that the Accessions Division continued to provide specific technical assistance, upon request.

ANNEX

EVOLVING CALENDAR OF ACCESSIONS MEETINGS (ECAM)¹

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
Wednesday, 25 June 2014	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on SPS (AM)	Convening fax dated 17 June 2014 refers	E	NO	TBC
Thursday, 26 June 2014	IGA	6 th 2014 Informal Group on Accessions (AM)	Convening fax dated 19 June 2014 refers	S3	NO	NO
Wednesday, 2 July 2014	Seychelles	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (AM)	Convening fax dated 5 June 2014 refers	D	NO	NO
Thursday, 3 July 2014	Seychelles	6 th Working Party Meeting (AM)	WTO/AIR/4312 dated 5 June 2014 refers	D	YES	NO
[Friday, 18 July 2014]	IGA	7 th 2014 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	S3	NO	NO
[Monday, 21 July 2014]	Kazakhstan	Transparency Session on Eurasian Union Agreement (EAU) (AM)	Convening Notice pending	D	NO	NO
		Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (PM)	Convening Notice pending	D	NO	NO
[Monday, 21 July 2014]	Kazakhstan	[Draft Services Schedule Verification Meeting (18:00-20:00)]	Convening Notice pending	D		
[Tuesday, 22 July 2014] ? TBC	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on SPS (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	D	NO	NO
[Tuesday, 22 July 2014]	Kazakhstan	[Draft Services Schedule Verification Meeting (18:00-20:00)]	Convening Notice pending	D		
[Wednesday, 23 July 2014]	Kazakhstan	19 th Working Party Meeting (AM/PM)	Convening Notice pending	D	YES	NO
[3 rd /4 th Quarter 2014]	Algeria	13 th Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[4 th Quarter 2014]	Liberia	2 nd Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[TBC]	Afghanistan	5 th Working Party meeting (AM/PM)	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.