



# WTO Accessions Newsletter

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

## IGA-AGENDA:

The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2014 took place today, 17 July. The meeting was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division. Members of the IGA were briefed on: (i) LDCs' accessions; (ii) the developments on the Accession of Kazakhstan; (iii) the state-of-play in active non-LDCs' accessions; (iv) accession WPs under "maintenance"; (v) vacant WP chairmanships; (vi) Revision and Update of the "Templates" for the submission of Accession "Negotiating Inputs"; and, (vii) accession-specific technical assistance and outreach. The Secretariat consulted IGA Members on the updated ECAM: Evolving Calendar of Accession Meetings for 2014 (annexed). H.E. Ambassador Vesa Himanen (Finland), Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan, participated and reported to Members on Item 2.



*Informal Group on Accessions Meeting - 17 July 2014  
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)*

## 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](mailto:Acceding-Government-Newsletter@wto.org)

## 2014 LDCs' ACCESSIONS

**Yemen:** IGA Members welcomed the delegation of Yemen to the IGA Family. Yemen became the 160th WTO Member on 26 June. In welcoming Yemen, the Director of the Accessions Division informed Yemen that the IGA Family worked together as one, in unity, to safeguard and strengthen the rules-based Multilateral Trading System through the terms and conditions of new accessions. The IGA was a special group. Its purpose included, enlarging the WTO, safeguarding and strengthening its rules, increasing market access opportunities and supporting those Acceding Governments that sought to use the rules-based Trading System to promote domestic reforms. Yemen committed to these ideals and stated that it was proud to join the Family.

## ACCESSION OF KAZAKHSTAN

Ambassador Vesa Himanen (Finland), Chairman of the Working Party (WP) on the Accession of Kazakhstan, briefed IGA Members on the state of play on this accession. Substantive progress had been made and was under way. The prospects were high for a 2014 completion, although outstanding work remained.

Re-engagement on several tracks of these accession negotiations had led to the resumption of this Cycle of the Working Party (WP) meetings. The next WP cycle start next week, 21 July. The cycle would include: (i) The "Transparency Session on the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Treaty"; (ii) Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture; (iii) Plurilateral Meeting on Market Access with Signatory Members; and, (iv) Informal and Formal WP Meetings. In preparation for this Cycle, the Secretariat had circulated a huge volume of updated Negotiating Inputs: (i) Updated Draft Working Party Report (DWPR); (ii) Replies to the Members' Questions; (iii) Revised Legislative Action Plan (LAP) and associated "Notices of Legislation"; and, (iv) updated AGSTs and Replies to Members' Questions linked to the revised Agricultural Chapter.

Overall, there were three issues of systemic significance, two of which would be taken up next week. These were: (i) Tariff adjustment and associated compensation; (ii) the transformation of the Customs Union of the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan (CU) into the EAEU, and; (iii) SPS. The issue of tariff adjustment held the key to making progress and advancing to conclusion on this negotiation. The WP Chairman's proposal on this question had been circulated in June. It was tabled under the Chair's own responsibility, based on consultations between Kazakhstan and Members. The proposal represented a basic framework for addressing the issue of tariff adjustment. It was work in progress. The EAEU Treaty was another significant issue. The Treaty, which had been signed on 29 May, would enter into force on 1 January 2015. It would transform the CU into the Eurasian Economic Union. The Transparency Session, restricted to WP Members, would be held as part of the July WP Cycle, to facilitate understanding of the Treaty. In preparation for the Session, the "Information Note on the EAEU Treaty" and the revised LAP had been circulated by the Secretariat. The third area of the negotiations of systemic importance and still outstanding was SPS. The next SPS Plurilateral was envisaged for September, if Negotiating Inputs are updated.

To conclude the Accession of Kazakhstan the Chairman requested Members and the Delegation of Kazakhstan to ensure pragmatism and, at the same time, safeguard the rules-based system.

## ACCESSION WORKING PARTIES (WP) IN FOCUS

**Seychelles:** This accession was in a good shape. The last cycle of WP meetings had taken place from 2 to 3 July. Minister Laporte continued to provide strong leadership. Bilateral negotiations on goods and services were virtually concluded. As soon as the negotiations were concluded, the Secretariat would consolidate the results of all bilateral market access agreements and prepare the draft schedules. The target was to issue the draft

schedules and the revised (final) Draft Working Party Report in August, if possible. To finalize the draft DWPR, Members had been invited by the WP Chairwoman, Amb. Hilda Ali Al-Hinai (Oman), to submit written questions by 25 July. On the current technical state of play, the accession of Seychelles was on track for a 2014 conclusion. Depending on the progress over the next three weeks, the next (and final) WP meeting could be scheduled in the second half of September.



*Accession of Seychelles - Cycle of WP Meetings - 2 and 3 July 2014  
(WTO Secretariat Photo / Souda Tandara-Stenier)*

**Bahamas:** Nassau had set itself the goal of a 2015 completion of its accession. On 30 June, DDG Shark hosted an informal gathering, where Members expressed support for the accession. Minister Pinder, the Chief Negotiator for WTO Accession of the Bahamas, met with Director-General Azevêdo, on 1 July. The Bahamas was fully focused on its WTO accession. It had upgraded its Geneva Office and was deploying additional resources to strengthen its negotiating capacity. Negotiating Inputs were awaited from Nassau.



*Accession of the Bahamas - Working lunch - 30 June 2014  
(WTO Secretariat Photo)*

## MAINTENANCE WORK

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

**Azerbaijan:** The Negotiating Team from Baku had been in Geneva from 30 June to 4 July for bilateral meetings. Deputy Minister Mammad-Guliyev met with DG Azevêdo, on 30 June and DDG David Shark, on 1 July, to review

the state-of-play of the accession process and requests for technical assistance. Azerbaijan had submitted revised AGSTs and responses to Members' questions on agriculture. These documents would be circulated by the Secretariat before the end of this week. DDG Shark had been invited to participate in a conference, in Baku, in early October.

Iran: Upon request, Director Accessions briefed Members on the state-of-play on the Accession of Iran. IGA Members were informed that the Delegation of Iran had renewed its appeal to Members, through the Secretariat, to reach consensus, as soon as possible, on the designation of a Chairperson for its Working Party.

Liberia: The Monrovia-based Negotiating Team, led by Minister Axel Addy, would be in Geneva on 24-25 July, to take stock and report on its domestic preparatory process for required Negotiating Inputs: answers to Members' questions; LAP; and, Market Access Offers on Goods and Services. Members interested in holding bilateral meetings were invited to contact the Secretariat.

#### VACANT WP CHAIRMANSHIPS

DDG Shark had consulted with Members, on behalf of the Chairman of the General Council. Two nominations for the 2 vacancies had been received: (i) Amb. Haluk Ilıcak (Turkey), for Belarus, and (ii) Amb. Thomas Hajnoczi (Austria), for Bhutan. DDG Shark had reported to the Director-General and the GC Chairman. Members would be informed of these results, at next week's meeting of the General Council (under the agenda-item "Any Other Business").

#### ACCESSION "NEGOTIATING INPUT" TEMPLATES / TECHNICAL NOTES

The WTO Secretariat had largely completed the comprehensive technical review and update of the Templates for Questionnaires, Checklists and Information Notes used by Acceding Governments to submit negotiating inputs to Working Parties. The updated Templates would be circulated on 25 July. Any comments received thereafter would be reflected in subsequent revisions of the documents. The Trade in Services Division was still reviewing the template WT/ACC/5 - "Information to be provided on Policy Measures Affecting Trade in Services - Technical Note by the Secretariat". As soon as this review is completed, it would be circulated to Members, for a 30-day review period, prior to formal circulation.

#### OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The IGA was informed that the Chairman of the Informal Group of Developing Countries had invited the Accessions Division to provide an updated briefing, on Monday, 21 July.

## ANNEX

EVOLVING CALENDAR OF ACCESSIONS MEETINGS (ECAM)<sup>1</sup>

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
Thursday, 17 July 2014	IGA	7 <sup>th</sup> 2014 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening fax dated 10 July 2014 refers	S3	NO	NO
Monday, 21 July 2014	Kazakhstan	Transparency Session on Eurasian Economic Union Treaty (EAEU Treaty), for WP Members only (AM)	Convening fax F14-21 dated 11 July 2014 refers	D	YES	YES
Tuesday, 22 July 2014	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (starts at 11:00 AM)	Convening fax F14-23 dated 17 July 2014 refers	D	NO	TBC
		Closed Plurilateral Consultations on the Chairman's Proposal on Ordinary Customs Duties - Signatory Members with signed and deposited Bilateral Market Access Agreements on Goods (PM)	Convening fax F14-22 dated 11 July 2014 refers	D	NO	TBC
Wednesday, 23 July 2014	Kazakhstan	Informal Meeting of the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan (AM)	Convening fax F14-21 dated 11 July 2014 refers	W	YES	YES
		19 <sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting (PM)	WTO/AIR/4333 dated 11 July 2014 refers	W	YES	YES
[Thursday, 25 September 2014]	IGA	8 <sup>th</sup> 2014 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Notice pending	E	NO	NO
[2 <sup>nd</sup> Half of 2014]	Seychelles	7 <sup>th</sup> Working Party Meeting (AM)	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2014]	Liberia	2 <sup>nd</sup> Working Party Meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[TBC]	Afghanistan	5 <sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:Souda.Tandara-Stenier@wto.org));
- Ms. Nadia Ferdi Demierre (Tel: 022 739 6560; e-mail: [Nadia.Ferdi@wto.org](mailto:Nadia.Ferdi@wto.org)); or
- [accessions@wto.org](mailto:accessions@wto.org)

<sup>1</sup> 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.