



**UNECE/WTO Trade Policy Forum  
on Central Asia and MTS  
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan  
11-13 May 2016**

***Accessions to the Rules-Based  
Multilateral Trading System:  
Opportunities and Challenges  
for Central Asia***

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World Trade Organisation**

# Overview

- ▶ State of the Global Economy and Necessity for Structural Reforms
  - ▶ WTO Accessions:
    - Why do countries want to join?
  - ▶ 20 years of accession results
  - ▶ State of Play in WTO Accessions in Central Asia
  - ▶ Opportunities and Challenges
- 



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# ***WTO Accessions***



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# Why do countries want to join the WTO?

- Rule of Law – The WTO as a legal framework
  - ✓ “Outlaw”
- Market Economy – Assisting market transition
- Domestic Reforms – An instrument for domestic reform and modernisation
- FDI Attraction
- International Cooperation: A seat at the rule-making table
- Risk of Non-Membership: Protectionist targeting
- Territorial Integrity
- Right of DSU Invocation





# Overview of WTO Accessions

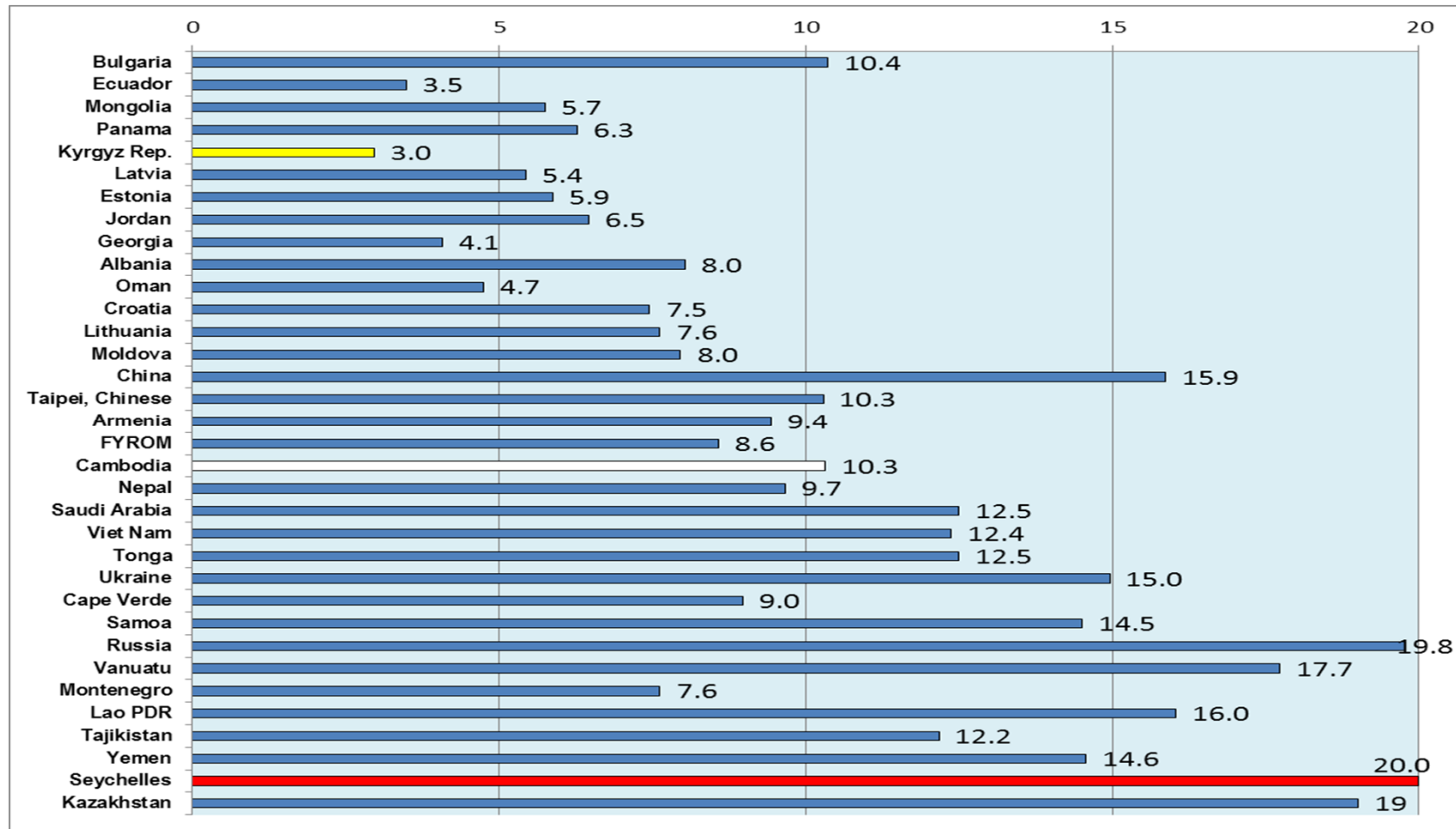
34 Governments acceded since 1995 via Article XII Negotiations, of which **11 from former USSR**

- Albania
- **Armenia**
- Bulgaria
- Cambodia\*
- Cape Verde
- China
- Chinese Taipei
- Croatia
- Ecuador
- **Estonia**
- Georgia
- Jordan
- **Kazakhstan**
- **Kyrgyz Republic**
- Lao PDR\*
- Latvia
- **Lithuania**
- Macedonia, FYR
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- **Moldova**
- Nepal\*
- Oman
- Panama
- **Russian Federation**
- Samoa\*
- Saudi Arabia
- **Tajikistan**
- Tonga\*
- **Ukraine**
- Vanuatu\*
- Viet Nam
- Yemen\*
- Seychelles

**Afghanistan and Liberia are expected to become WTO members in June**



# Length of Accessions



Source: WTO Secretariat

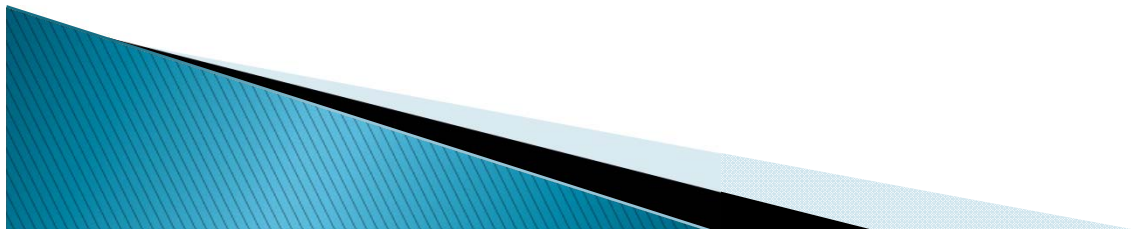
Average: 10 years and 5 months



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# 20 Years of Accessions Results

- ▶ **34** Governments have acceded via Article XII Negotiations
  - 7 acceded as LDCs (Cabo Verde and Samoa graduated afterwards);  
**plus,**
- ▶ **2** LDCs – Afghanistan and Liberia – are in process of domestic ratification.
  
- ▶ “Article XII Members” are 21% of WTO Membership
- ▶ Average length: 9 years and 11 months
- ▶ 1547 accession-specific legal obligations (including AFG and LBR).
- ▶ Real market access expansion in goods and services:
  - 549 bilateral agreements on goods (including AFG and LBR); and
  - 269 bilateral agreements on services (including AFG and LBR).

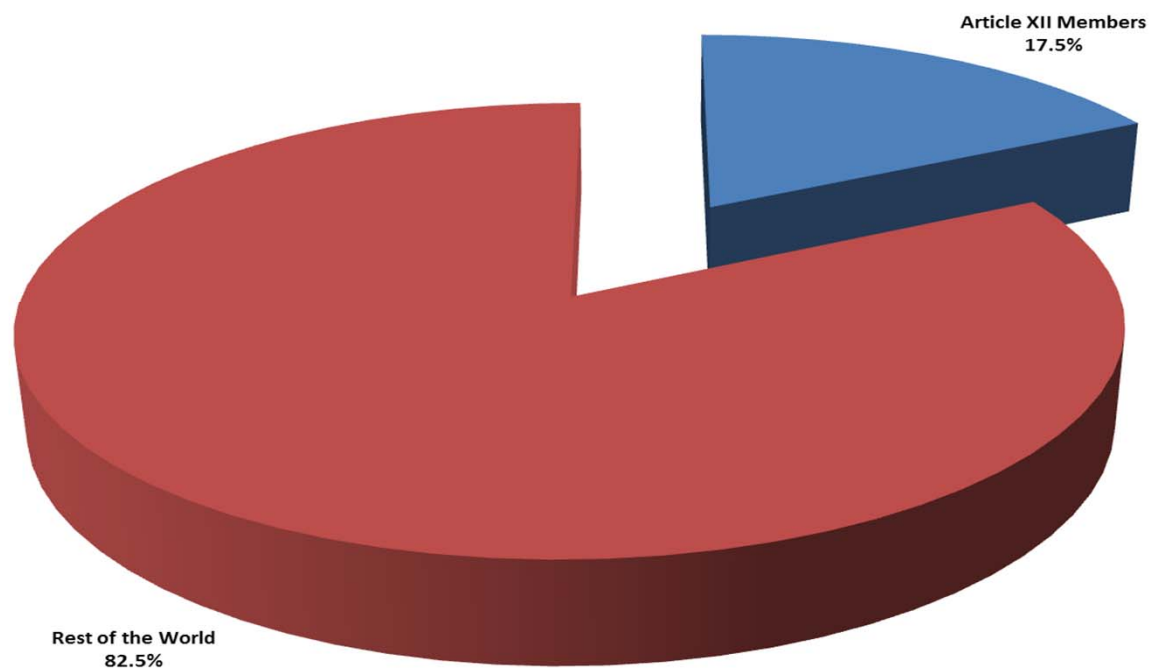




# Accession Results

## Coverage: 98% of World Trade

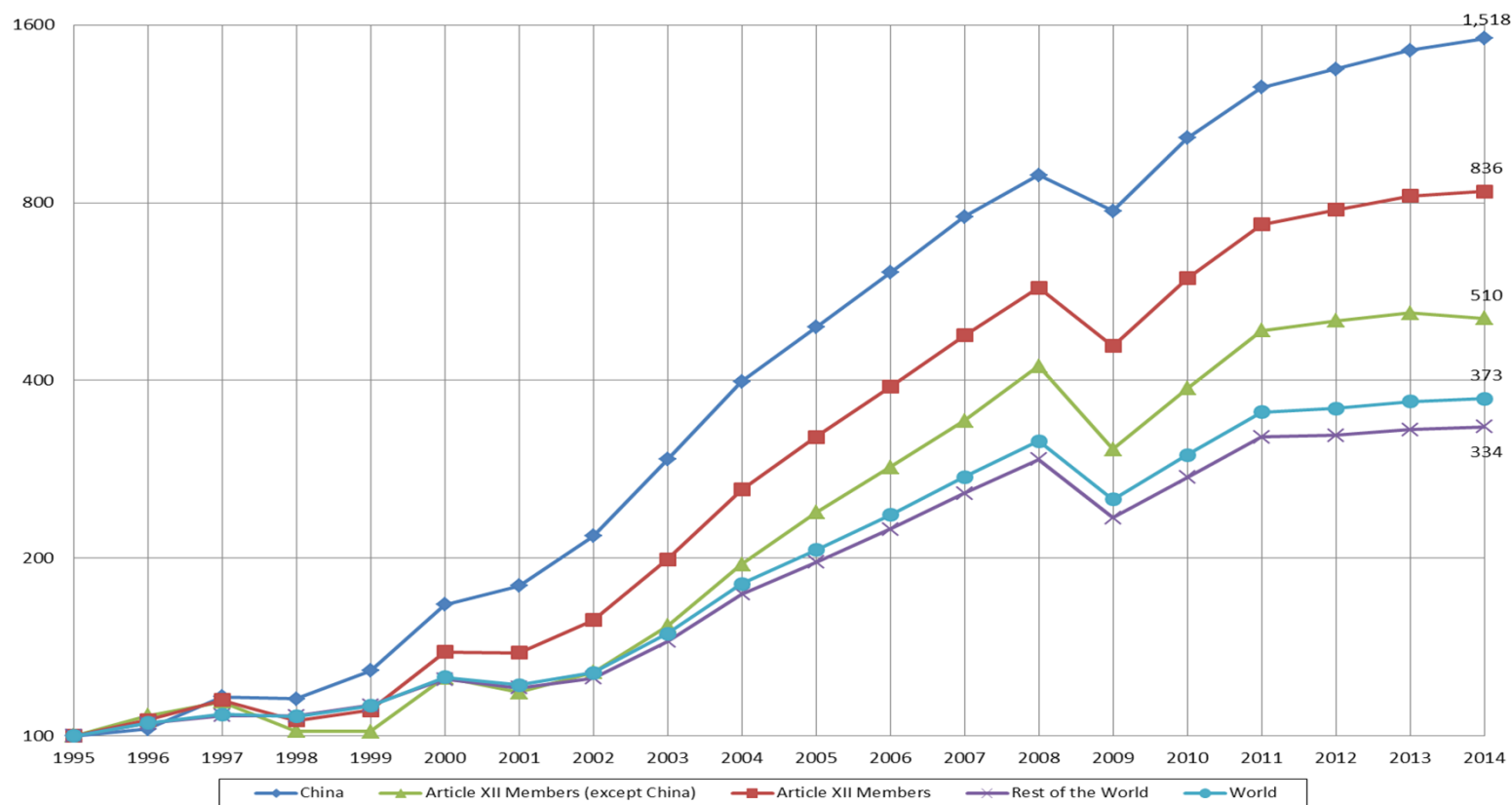
2014



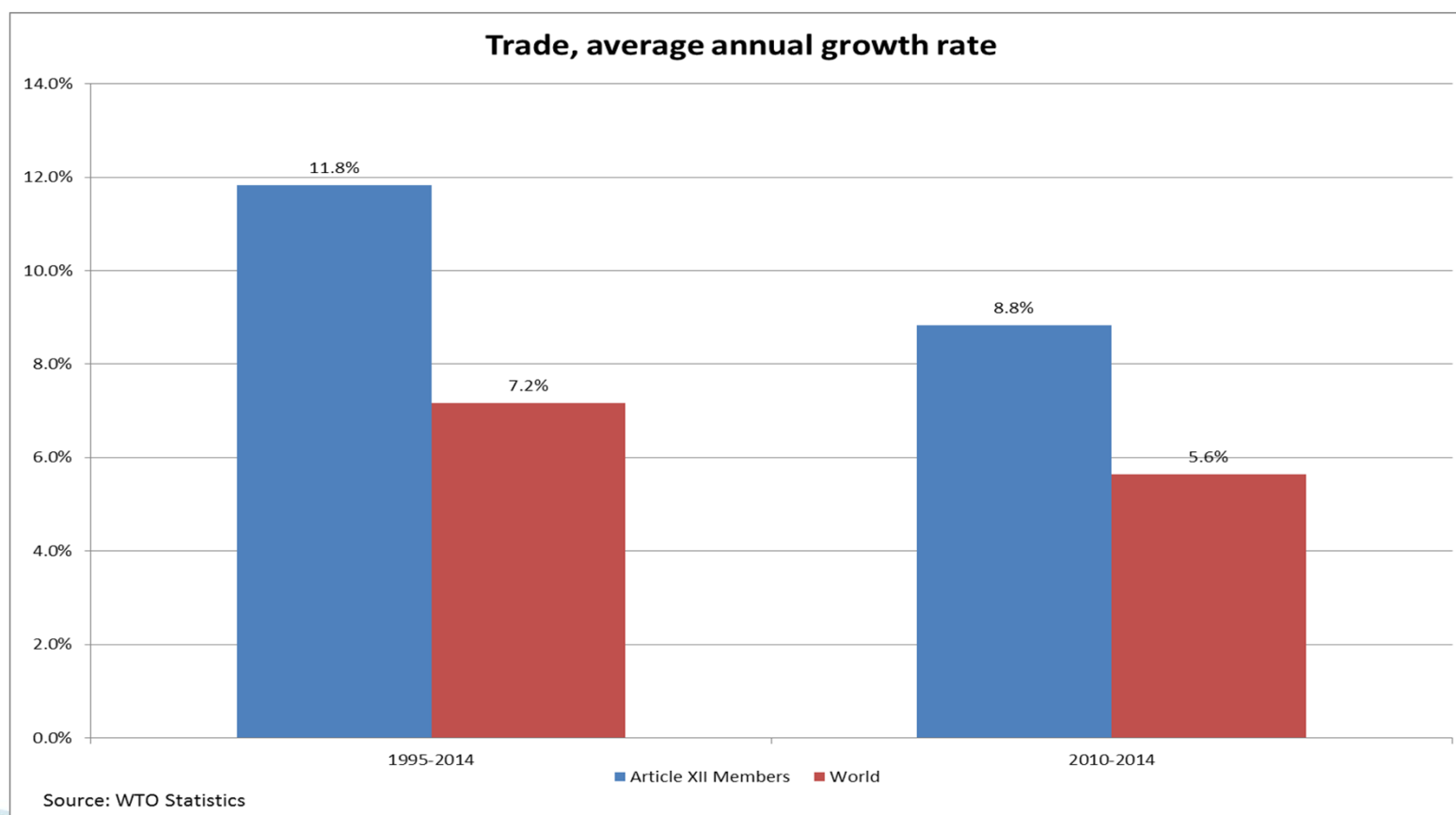


# Accession Results: Trade Performance

## Evolution of World Trade in nominal value by membership status



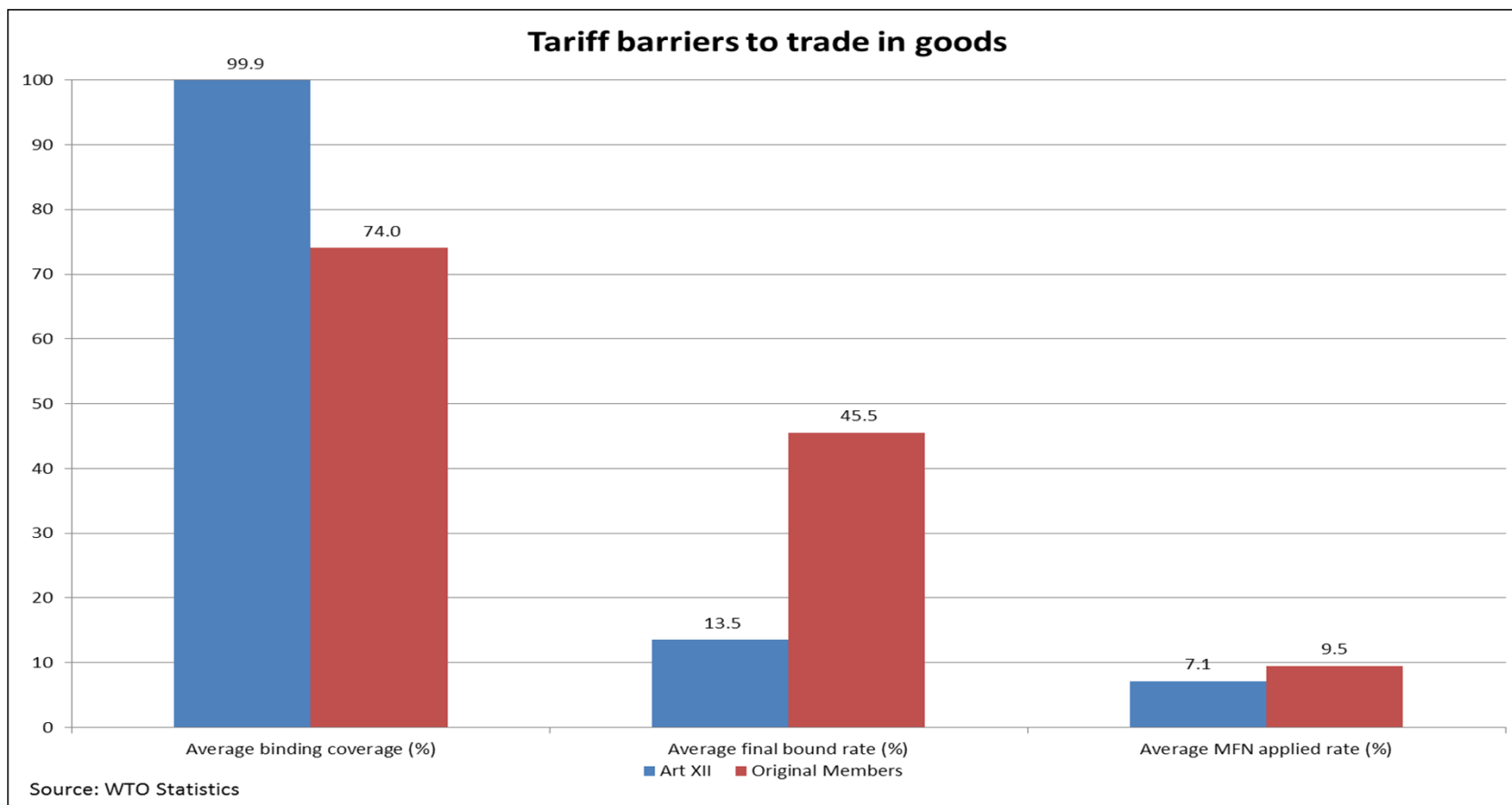
# Accession Results: Trade Growth





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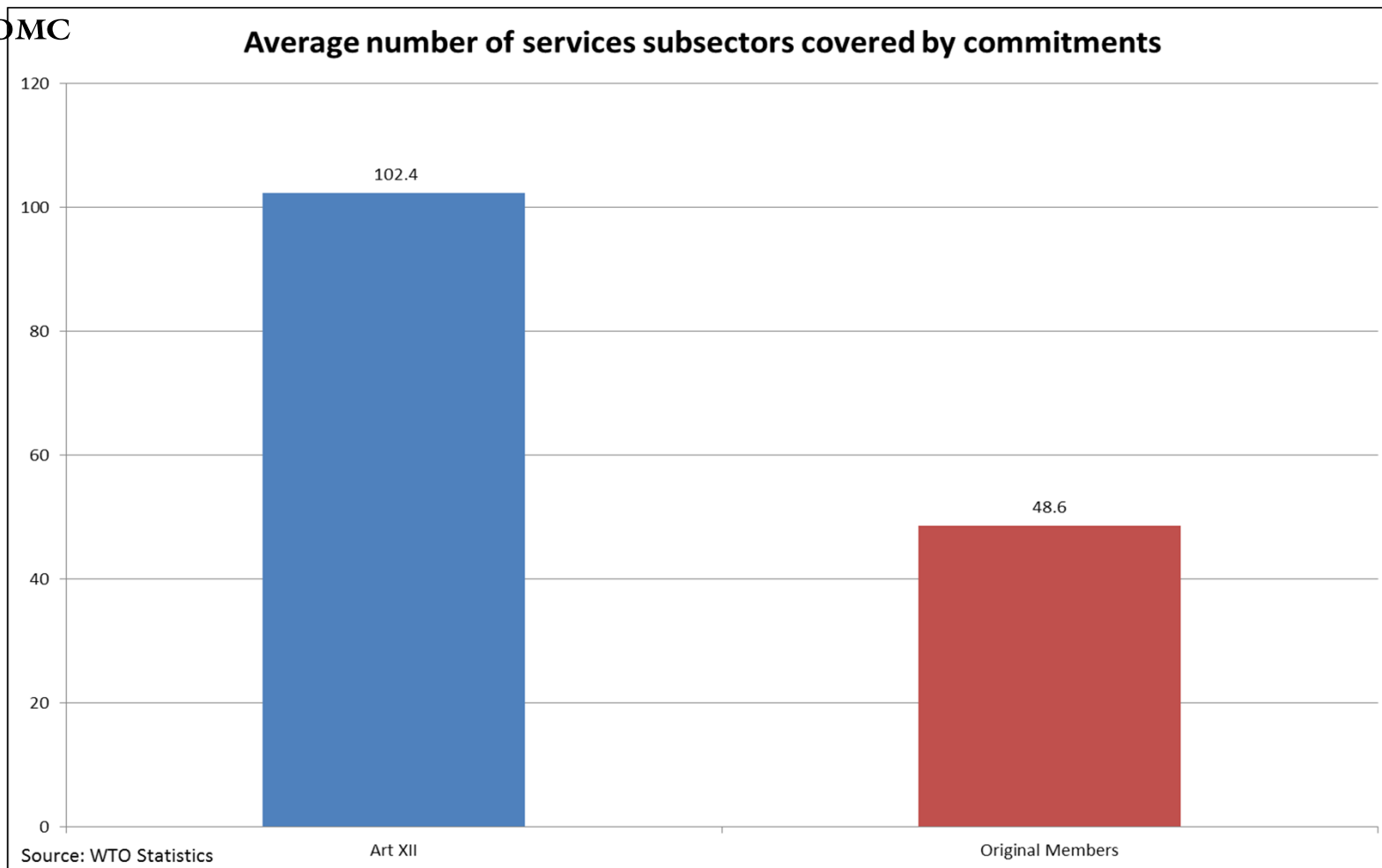
# Accession Results: Tariff Profiles





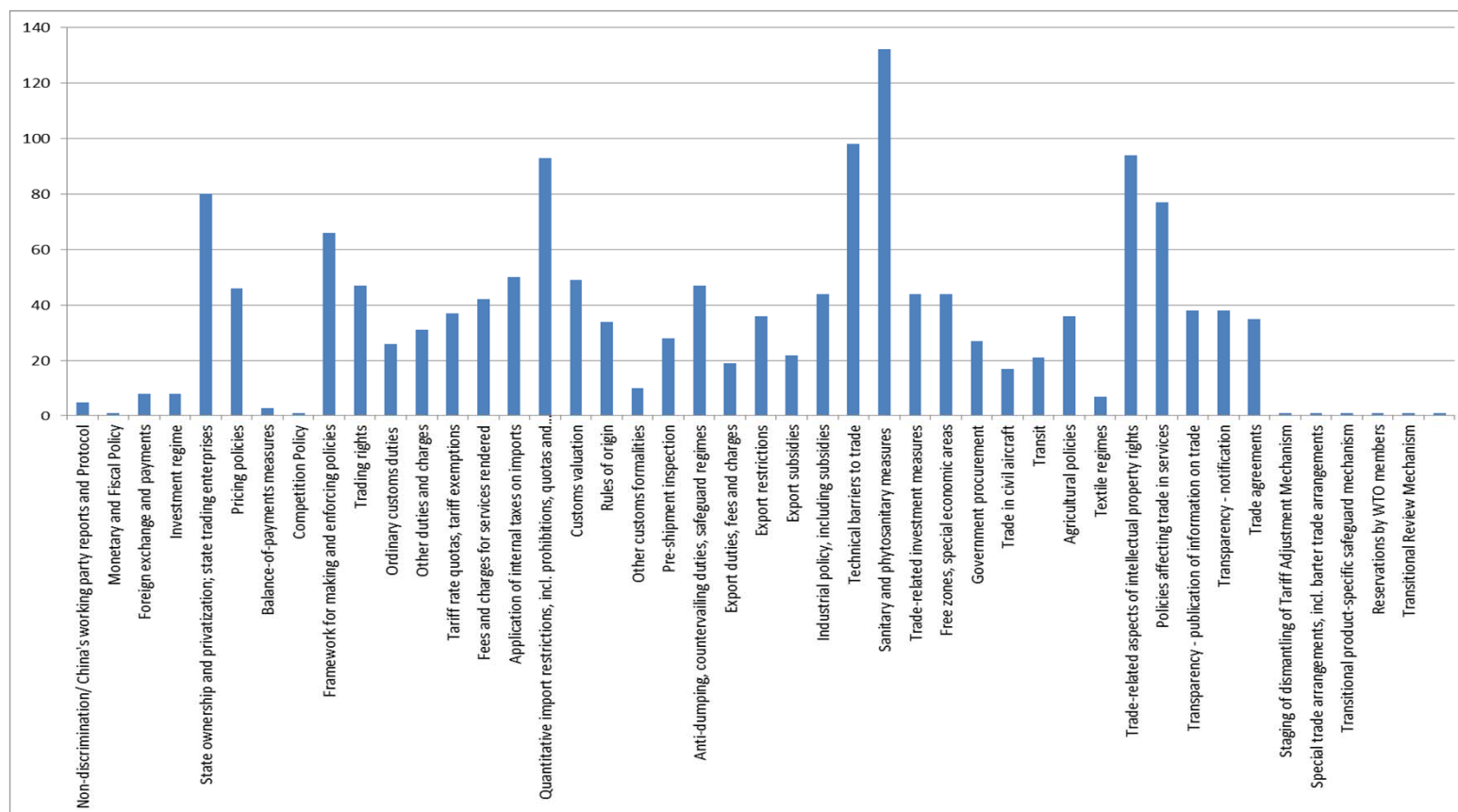
# Accession Results: Services Commitments

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# Accession Results: Strengthening Rules of MTS

## 36 Sections of Accession-Specific Obligations: Number of commitments of 34 Article XII Members







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# ***WTO Accessions: State of Play in Central Asia and its Neighbours***



# Map of WTO Members and Observers





# What Remains in WTO Accessions?

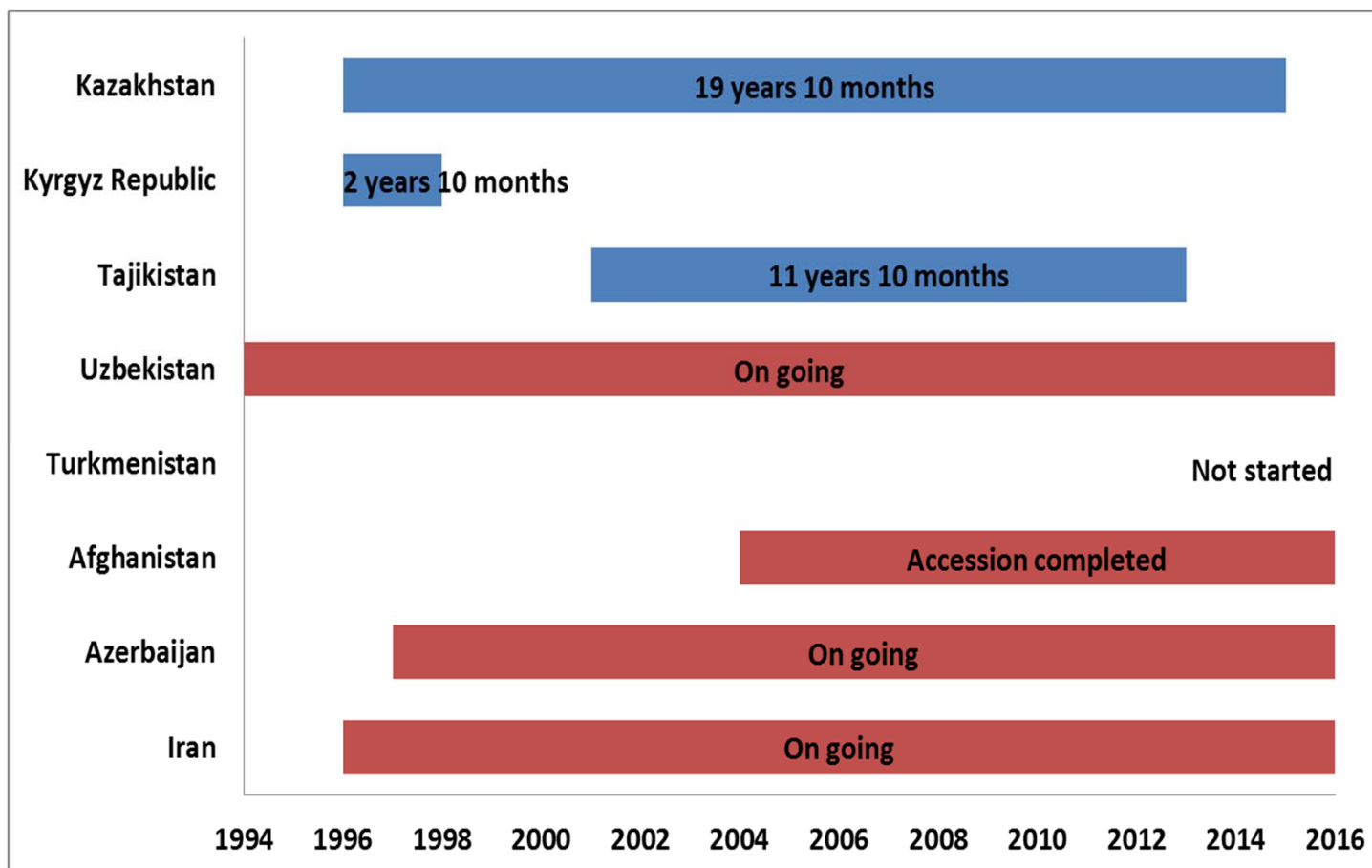
## 19 Accession Working Parties in process

- Algeria
- Andorra
- **Azerbaijan**
- The Bahamas
- Belarus
- Bhutan\*
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Comoros\*
- Equatorial Guinea\*
- Ethiopia\*
- **Iran**
- Iraq
- Lebanese Republic
- Libya
- Sao Tomé & Príncipe\*
- Serbia
- Sudan\*
- Syrian Arab Republic
- **Uzbekistan**

Average time since application: 16.5 years

**PLUS:** Expression of interest: South Sudan, Somalia, Timor-Leste

# WTO Accessions in Central Asia & its Neighbours



# WTO Accessions: Opportunities and Challenges

- ▶ Strategic importance of the Region
- ▶ Role of the WTO
  - WTO accession for structural reforms, economic diversification and modernization
  - Trade integration in the region
  - Trade facilitation
  - Connectivity
- ▶ Challenges
  - The state of global economy
  - Commodity prices
  - Geopolitical tensions



*Thank you*

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