

WTO Accessions Newsletter

The Ninth meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2012 took place today, 30 October. The Director of the Accessions Division briefed the IGA on: (i) the conclusion of the Accessions of Lao PDR and Tajikistan; (ii) the remaining 2012 Accession Priorities (Kazakhstan; Serbia; and Yemen (LDC)); (iii) the progress in nine other active accession processes; and (iv) technical assistance and outreach. The Secretariat also consulted with Members on the Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings until the end of the calendar year and early 2013 (as annexed).

2012 Accession Priorities

Lao PDR: The General Council formally adopted the Accession Package of Lao PDR at its Special Session on 26 October 2012. Lao PDR's Accession Working Party documents have been de-restricted. The Delegation of Lao PDR signalled that its Accession Package would be ratified at the December Session of its National Assembly. Following 30 days of the date of deposit of the Instrument of Ratification with Director-General Pascal Lamy, Lao PDR would become the 158th WTO Member (in early 2013).



Signing ceremony, Accession of Lao PDR, Geneva, 26 October 2012

Yemen: The second technical verification meeting took place on 19 October. This meeting was chaired by the Facilitators. This process remains work in progress. Members reaffirmed the objective of concluding Yemen's accession in 2012. They stressed the requirement for sufficient time to review the draft Accession Package. Members / WTO Groups have requested for an item on Yemen on the agenda for the December General Council.

Tajikistan: The Working Party adopted, *ad referendum*, the draft Accession Package of Tajikistan, and concluded its mandate. It forwarded the draft Accession Package to the General Council for formal action at its December meeting (11-12 December). The Director of the Accessions Division thanked the Working Party Members that intervened at the final Working Party meeting, including the most recent Article XII Member, the Russian Federation. He expressed appreciation for their support and pragmatism in concluding this 2012 Accession Priority.

Kazakhstan: Members commended the work undertaken in 2012 by Astana. Due to its technical complexity and decisions to be made, this 2012 Accession Priority would be carried over as a priority for 2013.

Serbia: Pending relevant legislative feedback from Belgrade, this 2012 Accession Priority has been transferred to 2013.

Accessions Maintenance Work

The Director of the Accessions Division reported on the progress in nine other active accessions (Afghanistan, Algeria; Azerbaijan; The Bahamas; Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ethiopia; Seychelles; and Uzbekistan). On the Accession of Belarus, the IGA was informed that the Secretariat had updated the Factual Summary and forwarded it to Minsk for review. The submission of relevant legislation was still outstanding. It was agreed that a stock-taking meeting would be scheduled, after the circulation of the updated Factual Summary. As follow-up to the Ninth IGA today, the Secretariat has circulated the economic country reports by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. On Uzbekistan, the IGA was informed that the Government has initiated the process to re-start its dormant accession. A Secretariat mission to Tashkent took place from 4-5 October. Uzbekistan is updating its Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime, market access offers and agriculture support tables. Consultations for the Working Party Chairmanship are underway.

Annual Outreach with WTO Regional Groups

In accordance with annual practice, the Director of the Accessions Division undertook annual outreach with the Arab Group, the LDCs' Consultative Group and the Informal Group of Developing Countries. The IGA was informed of the substantive feedback from these outreach meetings. The GRULAC and the African Group briefings would take place prior to the December General Council.

2012 Director-General's Annual Report on Accessions

The IGA was informed that Director-General Pascal Lamy was reviewing accession activities in 2012 in preparation for his 4th Annual Report on Accessions. The report would evaluate work on accessions in 2012, taking account of Members' 2012 accession priorities; Secretariat output planning; and Results Based Management (RBM).



Final Working Party Meeting, Accession of Tajikistan, Geneva, 26 October 2012

Evolving Calendar of WTO Accessions Working Parties

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					French Spanish English	Own
Tuesday, 30 October 2012	IGA	9 th Informal Group on Accessions	Fax dated 23/10/2012 refers	S3	no	no
Wednesday, 31 October 2012	Bosnia and Herzegovina	10 th Working Party	WTO/AIR/4027 refers (AM)	CR I	yes	tbc
		Plurilateral on Agriculture	Fax dated 18/10/2012 refers (PM)	CR I	no	tbc
[Friday, 7 December 2012]	Afghanistan	3 rd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM)	S2	yes	no
[Friday, 7 December 2012]	Azerbaijan	10 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (PM)	S2	yes	tbc
[November 2012]	Yemen	11 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	tbc	yes	tbc
[Last Quarter 2012]	Belarus	Informal Consultations	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	no	no
[Last Quarter 2012]	Serbia	13 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[Last Quarter 2012/ First Quarter 2013]	Kazakhstan	14 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[Last Quarter 2012/ First Quarter 2013]	Algeria	Informal/Formal WP meeting	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[Last Quarter 2012/ First Quarter 2013]	Ethiopia	4 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending	tbc	yes	no
[From Monday 10 to Friday 14 December – Second Geneva Week]						
[Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 December 2012 – General Council]						
[First Quarter 2013]	The Bahamas	3 rd Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM/PM)	tbc	yes	no
[First Quarter 2013]	The Seychelles	4 th Working Party	Convening Notice Pending (AM only)	tbc	yes	no

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 4 weeks.

Enquiries related to this calendar should be addressed to:

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