



WTO Accessions Newsletter

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

IGA-AGENDA:

The 7th meeting of the Informal Group on Accessions (IGA) in 2013 took place today, 19 July. The meeting was chaired by the Director of the Accessions Division. The IGA was briefed on: (i) the WP Chairman's visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina; (ii) the overall pace of accessions in technical focus for 2013; (iii) accession WP maintenance work; and, (iv) outreach and technical assistance. The Representative of Nepal made a statement on behalf of the LDCs' Consultative Group. The WTO Secretariat consulted Members on the ECAM: Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings for 2013 (annexed).

BRIEFING ON WP CHAIRMAN'S VISIT TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Chairman of the Working Party, Ambassador István Major, reported on his mission to Sarajevo, from 26 to 29 June. He underlined the commitment to WTO accession at the highest level of Government. Work on the multilateral front was almost complete. On the legislative front, the updated Legislative Action Plan had been circulated to WP Members on 18 July. Three pieces of legislation on trading rights, GMOs and antidumping and countervailing issues, would be finalized and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers between now and mid-September. On the bilateral front, the negotiating team was working to a calendar to conclude outstanding bilateral negotiations by 2 August. Overall, the accession of BIH was on track for a timely completion for MC9.



Ambassador Istvan Major, Chairman of the Working Party on the Accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina, IGA, 19 July 2013.

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE LDC GROUP

The Representative of Nepal, on behalf of the LDC Group, reiterated the benefit of WTO Accession for LDCs. LDCs' Accession to the Multilateral Trading Systems offered the opportunity for trade integration, domestic reform and strengthened institutions.

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

It also enhanced competitiveness to accelerate economic growth. He underlined, however, that, even though the revised Guidelines on LDCs' Accessions were expected to simplify the accession process, LDCs' accession to the WTO remained "tough". He, therefore, called for improvement, flexibility and simplification in the procedures, methodology and commitment on market access that were being sought by Members with respect to LDCs' accession. He further expressed his appreciation to the Accessions Division for its catalytic and facilitating role to help countries, in particular LDCs, to join the WTO. WTO Members (China, European Union and the United States) reaffirmed their support for LDCs' accessions and noted the opportunities for 2014.

OVERALL PACE OF ACCESSIONS

The Director of the Accessions Division welcomed the statement by the LDCs Group. He underlined that Article XII LDC Members played a vital role in strengthening and safeguarding the WTO rules-based system. The Accession of Yemen and Afghanistan, two LDC accessions on track for 2013 completion, would further continue to strengthen the multilateral trading system. He noted that WTO Membership was a multilateral instrument assisting domestic reform and the rule of law. The toughest negotiations were, not between Members and the Acceding Government, but within the Acceding Government itself.

2013 ACCESSION WP FOCUS

Yemen: The IGA was informed that this accession was done *de facto*. The Secretariat was undertaking technical checks, in coordination with Yemen. The final WP Meeting was envisaged for 18 September.

Afghanistan: The next cycle of meetings was scheduled for 25 July. Kabul had submitted a revised Legislative Action Plan. It had confirmed that, except for two draft laws, all WTO-relevant laws had been prepared, approved and submitted to the Ministry of Justice for review, after which they would be submitted to the Cabinet for final approval and subsequent enactment by Parliament. On the bilateral front, the Afghan negotiating team would be in Geneva, from 22 to 26 July, to conclude bilateral market access negotiations with Members.

Kazakhstan: The IGA was informed that this accession was off pace. Progress was minimal, incremental with no evident momentum. Outstanding questions were still to be addressed on: goods and services schedules; Headnotes, TRQ Volumes; TRIMS; State Trading Enterprises;

Government procurement; SPS; TBT; TRIPS; and, Agriculture. The next cycle of meetings (WP and Ag Plurilateral) were scheduled for 22 -23 July.

Serbia: The outstanding item on this accession was Belgrade's enactment of WTO-consistent GMO regulations.

MAINTENANCE WORK

The IGA was briefed on the progress in 6 other active accessions:

On Seychelles: The last WP had generated momentum, but considerable outstanding work remained. Although Seychelles remained committed to a 2013 completion, a number of technical issues had emerged, which would require time to sort and address. The WP Chairwomen, Ms Hilda Al-Hinai, accompanied by the Secretariat, would visit Victoria at the end of July. A report on the visit would be made to the IGA in August.

On Algeria, Following the plurilateral meeting on Agriculture, on 3 July, Members were invited to submit questions and comments by the end of August.

On Azerbaijan, Baku was working on proposals for commitment language for the Draft Working Party Report.

On Belarus, once all updated inputs were received from Minsk, the Secretariat would prepare a revised Factual Summary. After the circulation of a complete set of updated documentation, the WP Chairman would consult with Belarus and Members on the timing and format of the next meeting.

On Comoros, the MFTR was submitted on 10 July to the Secretariat. Members interested in Chairing the WP were invited to submit nominations for candidates to DDG Jara.

On Bahamas, the recently-appointed Ambassador of The Bahamas, Mme Rodha M. Jackson, met with the Accessions Division Team. Ambassador Jackson conveyed that the new Government planned to conclude its accession in the Fall of 2014.

OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The IGA was informed that, in the framework of the Annual Outreach dialogue with Regional Groups, three briefings had taken place: for the LDCs' Consultative Group, on 22 May; for the Informal Group of Developing Countries, on 25 June; and, for the Asian Group of Developing Members, on 15 July.

On Technical Assistance, the Second China Roundtable for LDCs was scheduled to take place, in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, 15 to 18 October. The Global Seminar on WTO Accessions would take place in Geneva, from 23 to 27 September. The Secretariat has established a webpage where the draft programs for these activities were listed.



Post-Accession meeting with Minister Nam, Geneva, 9 July 2013.

AWARDING THE HONOUR OF TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan's Minister of Economic Development and Trade, H.E. Mr Sharif Rahimzoda, awarded, on behalf of Tajikistan's President, H.E. Mr. Emomalii Rahmon, the National Honour of Tajikistan, on 10 July 2013 to the Chairman of the Accession Working Party, H.E. Ambassador Clyde Kull (Estonia); WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy; Mr. Chiedu Osakwe, Director of the Accessions Division; and, Mr. Dimitar Bratanov, Accession Working Party Secretary.



Award ceremony for the National Honour of Tajikistan to DG Pascal Lamy, Mr Chiedu Osakwe and Mr Dimitar Bratanov, 10 July 2013.

MESSAGE FROM THE ACCESSIONS DIVISION

On this last meeting of the IGA before the Summer break, the Accessions Division would like to thank Members and Acceding Governments for our close co-operation and joint work in the first half of 2013. We look forward to continuing in the same spirit in the second half, and to getting ready together for MC9. Although the IGA is going on a Summer break, please note that the Accessions Division will issue a WTO Accessions Newsletter at the end of August in order to: (i) take stock of where we stand/provide an updated state-of-play; and (ii) share an updated version of the ECAM. We wish you all a nice Summer break, and look forward to seeing you all at the next IGA meeting in September.



Accessions Division team, Château de Divonne, 29 April 2013.

Evolving Calendar of Accessions Meetings (ECAM)¹

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
Friday, 19 July	IGA	7 th 2013 Informal Group on Accessions	Convening Fax dated 11 July 2013 refers	S3	NO	NO
Monday, 22 July	Kazakhstan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (PM)	Convening Fax dated 16 July 2013 refers	S1	NO	TBC
Tuesday, 23 July	Kazakhstan	17 th Working Party Meeting (AM/PM)	WTO/AIR/4157 dated 11 July 2013 refers	S1	YES	TBC
Thursday, 25 July	Afghanistan	Plurilateral Meeting on Agriculture (AM)	Convening Fax dated 15 July 2013 refers	S1	NO	TBC
		4 th Working Party meeting (PM)	WTO/AIR/4160 dated 12 July 2013 refers	S1	YES	NO
[24 - 25 July]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[July]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Informal/Formal WP meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
5 - 6 September	WTO OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS					
[Wednesday, 18 September]	Yemen	11 th and final Working Party meeting (PM)	Convening Notice pending	D	YES	NO
23 - 27 September	2013 Accessions TA Activity Theme: "The Present and the Future of the Rules-Based Trading System: Contributions of WTO Accessions" – Part I: GLOBAL SEMINAR ON WTO ACCESSIONS (GENEVA) <i>"...safeguarding and strengthening the rules-based multilateral trading system..."</i>					
[Tuesday, 24 September]	Bosnia and Herzegovina	13 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[1 - 3 October]	WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2013					
[Week of 7 October]	Afghanistan	5 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[8 - 9 October]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[15-18 October 2013]	2013 Accessions TA Activity Theme: "The Present and the Future of the Rules-Based Trading System: Contributions of WTO Accessions" – Part II: SECOND CHINA PROGRAMME ROUNDTABLE FOR LDCs (LUANG PRABANG, Lao PDR) <i>"The Future of the Multilateral Trading System: Perspectives of LDCs and Article XII Members"</i>					
[Week of 21 October]	Seychelles	5 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd half of 2013]	Azerbaijan	11 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd half of 2013]	The Bahamas	3 rd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[2 nd half of 2013]	Ethiopia	4 th Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO

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.

Date	Working Party	Meeting	Status	Room	Interpretation	
					EN-FR-ES	Own
[2 nd half of 2013]	Liberia	2 nd Working Party meeting	Convening Notice pending	TBC	YES	NO
[5 - 6 November]	GENERAL COUNCIL					
[3 - 6 December]	NINTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC9) - BALI					

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