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PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENTS

EU, US Formally Launch Trade Talks at G-8 Summit

Washington and Brussels have officially kicked off negotiations for a bilateral trade and investment deal, announcing the news on Monday during the annual Group of 8 summit in Lough Erne, Northern Ireland. The decision comes just days after EU trade ministers signed off on a mandate for the bilateral talks, following prolonged internal arguing among the bloc's member states that had put the launch date in doubt.

"I always said that the whole point of this meeting in Lough Erne is to fire up our economies and drive growth and prosperity around the world – to do things that make a real difference to people's lives," UK Prime Minister David Cameron said in announcing the news. "And there is no more powerful way to achieve that than by boosting trade."

The two sides will hold their first round of talks in Washington next month. They have said that they aim to conclude the negotiations for such a deal – known formally as the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – by late next year.

The EU and US currently have the world's largest trading relationship, with bilateral trade hitting US\$2.7 billion in goods and services a day, according to 2012 [estimates](#). Since tariffs between the two partners are already low, many say that the real gains will come from harmonising regulations and standards and resolving other "behind-the-border" differences.

Not an "easy task"

While leaders from both sides welcomed the announcement, they were also quick to highlight the difficulties that the negotiations are likely to face. Previous efforts at deepening EU-US trade have hit stumbling blocks over subjects such as regulations and standards, and this latest endeavour has already exposed divides both between the trading partners and within the EU bloc on how to treat certain contentious issues.

"Integrating two of the most developed, most sophisticated, and certainly the largest economies in the world can never be an easy task, but we will find convincing answers to legitimate concerns," European Commission President José Manuel Barroso said at the launch on Monday.



International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development

US President Barack Obama echoed Barroso's assurances. "There are going to be sensitivities on both sides. There are going to be politics on both sides," he said. However, Obama said he remains "hopeful" that the two sides can reach a high-standard agreement, so long as both parties keep their focus on the "big picture."

The US President also pledged to make the project a priority for his administration, stressing the importance that the two sides "get it right" and avoid downsizing ambitions just for the sake of clinching an agreement.

Audiovisual services not on the table – for now

Prior to the G-8 gathering, EU officials had spent weeks working to resolve an internal disagreement within the 27-country group over the terms of the European Commission's negotiating mandate, only managing to ink an agreement late last Friday after hours of talks.

Specifically, France had warned for months that it would block the negotiations unless it was clear that the "cultural exception" – i.e. the exclusion of audiovisual goods and services from some trade disciplines – was not on the table.

Commission officials, as well as other member states such as the UK and Germany, had responded that outlining any "carve-outs" before the talks even began could open the door for Washington to demand the same for its own sensitive areas.

The mandate finally agreed by EU trade ministers on Friday does not, for the moment, include audiovisual services. However, the Commission will be able to return to the Council and ask for broader negotiating directives at a later stage if needed.

"I can live with this," EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht [said](#), stressing that the decision is "not a carve-out."

French officials welcomed the move, while being careful not to hail it as a win. "We are very satisfied, but I don't want to call it a victory," French Trade Minister Nicole Bricq told reporters on Friday.

Growth and jobs

Both the US and EU have ramped up their efforts in recent years to develop bilateral and regional trade pacts, as part of an effort to boost their fragile economic recoveries. For instance, while the US is one of 11 countries – soon to be 12 with the addition of Japan in July – negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, the EU is involved in separate talks with Japan, India, Canada, and the Mercosur countries, among others.

Given this context, Cameron had pledged earlier this year that trade – especially the launch of the EU-US talks – would be a priority during the UK's presidency of the G-8, despite persistent questions over whether London will even remain in the EU past 2017. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 January 2013](#))

Along with the UK and US, the G-8 also includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Russia.

"We meet at a time of continued economic uncertainty," G-8 leaders said in their final [communiqué](#) on Tuesday. They therefore pledged to "break down barriers to trade at home and abroad," by concluding major trade deals and by resisting protectionism. The declaration comes amid recent reports – such as that issued by the Centre for Economic Policy Research's [Global Trade Alert](#) – that trade restrictive measures are on the rise.

Despite the importance of trade, however, G-8 officials have warned that it is not the only measure needed for developed economies to avoid sliding back into recession.

"It's important that we also make sure that [this EU-US deal is] part of an overall plan to do what it takes to promote growth and jobs," Obama said on Monday. "Trade is critical but it is not alone a silver bullet; it has to be part of a comprehensive strategy that we pursue on both sides of the Atlantic."

The proposed Washington-Brussels agreement – and others of a similarly large scale – has caused waves among the international policy community, both due to its trade-boosting potential, but also as a result of the growing debate over what impact so-called "mega-regional" deals will have on the multilateral trading system.

Some have questioned whether this push for trade deals by major economies could be a sign of decreased interest in the multilateral talks being held at the WTO, while others have suggested that these deals can actually complement the current framework amid the prolonged impasse in the Doha Round negotiations.

G-8 officials, for their part, stressed that these trade deals "will be consistent with and supportive of the WTO framework, acting as building blocks for future multilateral agreements in the WTO, which ultimately remain the most effective means of reducing trade barriers globally." Leaders also highlighted their commitment to the multilateral trading system and to achieving outcomes in time for the WTO ministerial conference in December.

ICTSD reporting; "France backs EU-U.S. trade talks after culture clash," REUTERS, 14 June 2013.

AGRICULTURE

Negotiators See Glimmer of Hope on WTO Food Stockholding Talks

Trade negotiators may have identified key ingredients in a potential deal on food stockholding for the WTO's ninth ministerial conference in Bali, Indonesia this December, trade sources say.

Delegates expressed cautious optimism that informal consultations held by the chair of the agriculture negotiations, New Zealand ambassador John Adank, had helped to identify possible elements of an eventual accord – even though they warned that no agreement had yet been reached.

A number of developing countries are seeking to expand the scope under WTO rules for them to subsidise food purchases from low-income, resource-poor producers when building government stockpiles or providing domestic food aid. However, developed countries in particular have expressed concern that the move could allow countries to provide unlimited sums of trade-distorting farm support to their farmers – potentially undermining producers in other countries. (See Bridges Weekly, [2 May 2013](#))

Governments that put forward the proposal, from the G-33 group of countries with sizeable smallholder farming populations, have argued that some progress on agricultural trade is vital to "balancing" a Bali deal on trade facilitation – which proponents say would cut red tape and bureaucracy at national borders.

Three elements emerge

One trade source told Bridges that three main elements could form the core of an eventual package on the controversial question.

Firstly, governments could recognise that a set of farm subsidy programmes used mostly by developing countries would be allowed without limits under WTO rules, so long as these did not cause more than minimal trade distortion. Negotiators have proposed that land reform, rural livelihoods, and poverty alleviation programmes could be among the programmes covered.

Secondly, a "peace clause" could commit countries to refrain from challenging food stockholding and domestic food aid programmes in the WTO's dispute settlement process. Although Adank has pointed to past [commitments](#) with similar effect, negotiators told Bridges that the details of any such accord have yet to be agreed.

Thirdly, governments could agree to continue discussing the issue after the Bali ministerial has ended. A US call for a post-Bali "work programme" on trade and food security was initially met with scepticism from developing countries, who feared the move could delay substantive progress on their concerns. (See Bridges Weekly, [2 May 2013](#))

Details still unclear

"It could all fail before the summer break," warned another negotiator who was more sanguine about the prospects for progress. The source told Bridges that a breakthrough on the G-33 proposal could only be achieved by developing countries "releasing some hostages on the trade facilitation front."

Developed countries have claimed that countries such as India have been holding the trade facilitation talks “hostage” to the stockpiling proposal. New Delhi has meanwhile argued that developed country concessions on the G-33 proposal are an essential part of a successful Bali outcome.

One delegate said that negotiators were also unlikely to coalesce around four “variables” that the G-33 had proposed, which proponents say could provide developing countries with more flexibility, in a bid to build consensus. (See Bridges Weekly, [2 May 2013](#))

“External reference prices: tinkering with that is clearly not going to happen for Bali,” said the source, with regard to one of the areas that the G-33 had put forward.

Another negotiator told Bridges that there had been “no” progress on the G-33 proposal, while acknowledging that trade officials “did have a good go last week.”

“All the details still need to be hammered out,” another trade source glumly observed.

Export competition: US, EU dig in heels

A proposal on cutting export subsidies and export credits, tabled by the G-20 group of developing countries active on agriculture, continued to receive a cool reception from developed countries that historically have made use of these instruments.

The US and EU were particularly opposed to the issue being addressed in Bali, sources said – despite a ministerial agreement eight years ago to phase these measures out in 2013.

G-20 countries were looking at how best to address criticism that their proposal did not effectively discipline export competition in developing countries, trade sources said.

However, other sources told Bridges that both members had expressed their unwillingness to discuss the issue even before the proposal had been tabled.

A third agriculture issue, easing the administration of tariff quotas, has not been discussed in detail by negotiators since the G-20 tabled a proposal on this last September. (See Bridges Weekly, [3 October 2012](#)) However, trade sources widely expect it to form part of an eventual Bali package, if progress is made on other areas.

ICTSD reporting.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Difficult Bonn Climate Talks Produce Mixed Outcome

The midyear United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) talks in Bonn wrapped up on Friday, with many delegates declaring a general sense of satisfaction with the outcome. The somewhat positive result came as a surprise to many, following a protracted block from Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus that many analysts said threatened to stymie progress.

Sources say that underlying the blockage was Moscow's objection to the way the UNFCCC's Eighteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 18) in Doha, Qatar had ended last December. (See Bridges Doha Update #3, [12 December 2012](#)) According to reports, the chair of the COP gavelled the deal despite objections from Russia.

The talks are the final round of midyear negotiations to lay the groundwork for the COP 19, slated to take place in Warsaw, Poland this November. (See Bridges Trade BioRes Review, [May 2013](#)) The end-of-year meeting will host the 39th sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and the second to third session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP 2-3).

The next few months will see preparations for the Warsaw Conference, a major stepping stone on the path toward the signing of a new global climate pact in 2015. Due to enter into force by 2020, the agreement would bind all countries to measurable targets for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. It is hoped that this agreement would allow countries to avoid the most calamitous warming-induced climate effects – including droughts, floods, storms, and sea-level rise – by limiting global warming. In addition, countries need to agree on measures for adapting to the near-term, unavoidable impacts of climate change.

"Concrete progress" despite SBI impasse

Several Parties in Bonn voiced their dissatisfaction with Russia's insistence on introducing a new item on legal and procedural issues related to decision-making under the Kyoto Protocol.

The SBI was charged with three tasks in Bonn: kick-starting a discussion on a global mechanism to compensate countries for climate change-related loss and damage; drafting the 2014-2015 budget for the UNFCCC secretariat; and reviewing whether the UN's target of limiting the global temperature rises to 2°C should be lowered to a safer level of 1.5°C. However, no work was completed as Russia and other parties were unable to come to an agreement.

Although backed by Ukraine and Belarus, many attending the talks reportedly accused Russia of failing to place a priority on the urgent need to address climate change. European Union climate envoy Jorgen Lefevere described the blockage as a "regrettable setback," with the SBI throwing in the towel on Tuesday.

Despite deep concerns about SBI's impasse, most parties agreed that the issues raised by Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine are valid. Nonetheless, it was difficult to resolve the dispute in

Bonn and some parties wanted to avoid setting a "dangerous precedent," Earth Negotiations Bulletin reported.

On the other hand, delegates in the other two working groups – the SBSTA and the ADP 2 – remained in high spirits, with a UNFCCC statement declaring that the Bonn meeting produced "concrete progress."

The Bonn talks saw the SBSTA making progress on a number of agenda items, and the ADP continuing a conversation structured around outlining the contours of a possible agreement and enhancing ambition for the pre-2020 period. SBSTA also agreed to recommend a draft decision on modalities for national forest monitoring systems for adoption by COP 19.

"We are encouraged by the progress that has been reached here," UNFCCC head Christiana Figueres told journalists.

SBI Chair praises parties, despite challenges

Thanking delegates for their "constructive, positive, and forward looking statements," SBI Chair Tomasz Chruszczow noted at the end that although consensus could not be reached on the SBI agenda, the conference has shown that parties will come to Warsaw with "a new spirit of compromise, trust, openness, and understanding."

Quoting Desmond Tutu, Chruszczow said: "Differences are not intended to separate, to alienate. We are different precisely in order to realise our need of one another."

Delegates are holding the same hopes for the upcoming Warsaw Conference, which has a role to play in achieving a strong package of implementation measures to lead to a clear pathway for a legally-binding agreement and progress to raise pre-2020 ambition.

According to reports, finance ministers are set to be invited to COP 19. Sources say the move could be critical given that negotiations on climate financing often require high-level commitments that environment and energy officials attending international climate negotiations cannot provide.

Artur Runge-Metzger, head of the EU delegation, was optimistic that the presence of finance ministers could motivate countries looking to receive finance to solidify details on what they would spend it on.

"It is good for finance ministers to come a little closer to the process and see what the spending is for," Metzger explained. "There might be some disconnect in some parts of the world in that respect."

The gathering of finance ministers could also be the solution to the disagreement over whether the Fast Start Finance commitment of US\$30 billion between 2010-2012 was met by donor nations. The EU, Japan, and the US all claim to have met their commitments, but critics say much of the pledged money has not yet appeared.

"COP19 cannot have the same outcome on finance as last year's Doha negotiations," said Brandon Wu, climate finance policy analyst with Action Aid, a UK-based development NGO. "If developed countries take these steps in Warsaw, it would send a real signal that they are taking their obligations seriously and are genuinely interested in making progress in these negotiations."

ICTSD reporting; "Mixed-Bag Climate Conference Closes in Bonn," AFP, 15 June 2013; "Finance Ministers Set for UN Climate Talks Invite," RTCC, 17 June 2013; "Bonn Climate Change Conference – June 2013," EARTH NEGOTIATIONS BULLETIN, 14 June 2013.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

US Supreme Court: Human Genes Cannot Be Patented

The US Supreme Court announced last week that naturally-occurring human genes are not patentable, in a landmark ruling that many observers say could have lasting implications for innovation in areas such as health care and biotechnology.

In its decision, the Court unanimously accepted the plaintiff's request that the patents on two human genes held by Myriad Genetics are not patent-eligible, due to the fact that these genes occur in nature. Synthetic DNA – in other words, DNA strands modified in a lab – can, however, be patented.

"It suffices for me to affirm...that the portion of DNA isolated from its natural state sought to be patented is identical to that portion of the DNA in its natural state; and that complementary DNA (cDNA) is a synthetic creation not normally present in nature," Justice Antonin Scalia said in his concurring opinion, while acknowledging the complexities of the case.

The US' highest court thus effectively drew a line between the mere practice of extracting natural genes and the creation of synthetic DNA in laboratories. Myriad's "method" patents – which cover the screening and testing processes, as opposed to the underlying genes – remained unaffected by the Court's decision.

The two genes under examination, which were first isolated by the US-based company, are at the basis of diagnostic tests that are capable of assessing individuals' genetic risks of breast and ovarian cancer.

Long-standing controversy

The issue of human gene patentability has historically been controversial in the US. Since the 1980s, the US Trademark and Patent Office has granted approximately 4,000 patents on human genes.

The legal dispute had received worldwide attention as the petitioners – a coalition of doctors, scientific researchers, and health organisations – argued that the patents restricted access to such diagnostic tests. Patients could face costs of over US\$4,000 to undertake DNA testing, even though it is difficult to estimate to what extent the price reflects Myriad's IP-induced monopoly position.

In addition, some have observed that lowering the patentability bar to award patents on human genes would stifle incremental innovation – in other words, efforts aimed at developing inventions around the patented subject matter – rather than promoting it.

However, the implications of the decision in terms of access to genetic technologies and health care still remain disputed.

Some laboratories have announced they will now be conducting diagnostic tests based on the two genes under consideration, thereby contributing to lower prices. For instance, Houston-based DNATraits [said](#) it would offer analogous testing for US\$995 – less than a third of the current price in the US.

Uncertainty also remains regarding the degree to which the decision will spill over to other technologies and sectors. For instance, the number of diagnostic tests run by a single firm that enjoys patent-induced monopolist status appears to be limited, according to some experts. In addition, as synthetic genes remain patentable in the US, the ruling may have little impact on research and development in other sensitive sectors, such as genetically-engineered crops.

Mixed responses among civil society, experts

Following the decision, both parties involved in the case have claimed victory, citing the specific provisions of the ruling that were in their favour.

"We believe the Court appropriately upheld our claims on cDNA, and underscored the patent eligibility of our method claims, ensuring strong intellectual property protection for our BRACAnalysis test moving forward," Myriad president and CEO Peter D. Meldrum said in a [statement](#).

On the plaintiff front, American Medical Association President Jeremy A. Lazarus [countered](#) that the decision to reject patenting human genes "is a clear victory for patients that will expand medical discovery and preserve access to innovative diagnosis and treatment options."

Conflicting views have emerged from civil society and experts as well.

"Isolated DNA itself is not something that companies seek to protect anymore," Matthew McFarlane of Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P. – a US law firm focusing on technology and intellectual property – told the Associated Press, explaining that biotech companies have begun redirecting their investments towards synthetic options and other IP-related forms of protection.

"On a day-in and day-out basis, I don't see this [ruling] changing that part of the industry," he explained.

Others have called the ruling a win for the biotechnology industry, given the finding that synthetic DNA is indeed patentable.

Some industry officials, meanwhile, lambasted the ruling, calling it overly limiting. "The United States is now the only developed country to take such a restrictive view of patent eligibility, signalling an unjustified indifference towards our global economic and scientific leadership in the life sciences," Jim Greenwood, president and CEO of the US-based Biotechnology Industry Organisation, [observed](#).

ICTSD reporting; "After Patent Ruling, Availability of Patent Tests Should Broaden," THE NEW YORK TIMES, 13 June 2013; "Supreme Court DNA Ruling: Court Says Human Genes Cannot Be Patented," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 13 June 2013; "Supreme Court rules human genes may not be patented," THE WASHINGTON POST, 13 June 2013.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

Trade Restrictions on the Rise Among G-20 Members, WTO Warns

Trade restrictive measures by the Group of 20 economies are once again on the rise, according to the latest monitoring report released by the WTO this week. The news comes just months after the organisation reined in its 2013 trade growth forecasts by more than one percentage point, in light of continued global economic uncertainty. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 April 2013](#))

Monday's [report](#), which covers the period between mid-October 2012 and mid-May 2013, is part of the organisation's effort to monitor G-20 countries' adherence to their post-financial crisis pledge to avoid resorting to trade protectionism.

The document is released jointly with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) report on investment measures. The three organisations have issued these two reports at roughly six-month intervals since September 2009.

Over 100 new trade restrictions

Despite having reaffirmed their commitment to refrain from raising or imposing new barriers to trade and investment at last year's leaders' summit in Los Cabos, Mexico (see Bridges Weekly, [25 April 2012](#)), this latest report finds that G-20 countries have continued to implement trade restrictive measures, with over 100 such measures recorded in the last seven months.

During this period, trade remedy investigations accounted for 61 percent of all trade restrictive measures, with anti-dumping investigations and temporary tariff increases being the most prevalent.

Notably, 70 trade facilitation measures have been implemented since the last monitoring report. However, in the same time period, the share of trade-facilitating measures has decreased from 55 percent of all trade measures to 40 percent.

Moreover, only 19 percent of trade restrictions imposed since October 2008 have been eliminated, as compared to 21 percent last year, fuelling concerns that such measures are accumulating rather than dissipating.

Lamy: G-20 should "unlock the potential for trade" in time for Bali

The weakness of import demand within the EU, which previously accounted for 35 percent of all world merchandise imports in 2011, has had far-reaching repercussions within the international trade system. In total, imports of developed economies fell by two percent and imports of developing countries rose by two percent, leaving a zero percent overall growth in world imports in the second half of last year, according to the report.

Despite the worrying increase in G-20 restrictions, the report notes that the trade impact of import measures is only approximately 0.2 percent, indicating that countries have overall been successful in resisting widespread protectionism.

However, given the uncertain prospects for the global economy, WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy reiterated previous calls to G-20 governments to avoid "making matters worse" by adopting isolationist and trade-restrictive policies.

Instead, he said, governments should focus on "unlock[ing] the potential for trade to grow stronger" by ensuring a successful WTO ministerial conference in Bali this December, such as by clinching a deal on trade facilitation (for more on the Bali preparations, see related article, this issue).

"Trade can once again be an engine of growth and a source of strength for the global economy rather than as a source of instability and tension," Lamy said. "At this stage, the world economy needs all the help it can get, and trade is an important and viable option."

ICTSD reporting.

IN BRIEF

EU, China Trade Officials to Discuss Solar Panel Row in Beijing

After weeks of public sparring, the EU and China may be inching closer to an agreement over their solar panel dispute, with informal talks on the issue scheduled for this Friday in Beijing. Technical-level discussions with Chinese experts have already begun in Brussels, EU Trade Spokesman John Clancy [said](#) on Tuesday.

EU Trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht is slated to meet with Chinese Minister of Commerce Gao Hucheng on Friday in the context of the EU-China Joint Committee, an annual ministerial focusing on issues of bilateral trade and investment. While the solar panel dispute is not on the ministerial's formal agenda, Clancy noted that it would be discussed in the margins of the event.

Tensions between the two trading partners ramped up last month when the EU announced it would be imposing anti-dumping duties on imports of Chinese-made solar panels and their component wafers and cells— a move that was promptly lambasted by Beijing. Provisional tariffs are currently set at 11.8 percent, and will increase to 47.6 percent in August if the two sides fail to reach a solution.

ICTSD reporting.

EU Launches WTO Complaint on Chinese Steel Duties

The EU lodged a WTO complaint last week against China regarding the Asian country's imposition of anti-dumping duties on imports of high-performance stainless steel seamless tubes (HP-SSST). The two sides will now have 60 days to conduct consultations before Brussels can request the establishment of a dispute panel to rule on the case.

"We have to protect Europe from unfair competition," EU Industry Commissioner Antonio Tajani said last Thursday. Brussels [claims](#) that Beijing has violated WTO rules "both on substantive and procedural grounds" in the anti-dumping investigation. China, however, claims that its investigation was conducted in line with its international obligations.

China currently imposes duties ranging from 9.7 to 11.1 percent on imports of this particular steel from the EU. Japan has already filed a similar case ([DS454](#)) against China regarding the same type of products, with a panel being established in May to hear the case. Should the EU complaint reach the panel stage, the two cases could be combined to be reviewed by the same panel. (See Bridges Weekly, [30 May 2013](#))

ICTSD reporting; "UPDATE 2-EU files WTO complaint over Chinese stainless steel duty," REUTERS, 13 June 2013; "European Union to take China to World Trade Organization in fresh dispute," THE ECONOMIC TIMES, 13 June 2013.

Industry Group Backs Aviation Emissions Reduction Proposal

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has agreed to push for a global market-based scheme to reduce emissions from the aviation industry, representatives from the group announced this month. Their proposed plan, if enacted, would require airlines to offset any increase in emissions after 2020 by purchasing carbon permits from other carbon-cutting projects.

The proposal comes ahead of this fall's meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), where the UN body is set to discuss possible global plans to lower aviation emissions. While the EU has suspended the controversial inclusion of aviation in its EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) for one year, the 27-country bloc has warned that it will reinstate it if ICAO does not show progress toward such a global solution in that time. (See Bridges Weekly, [14 November 2012](#))

IATA, which represents 240 airlines that cover 84 percent of global air traffic, is the first industry vessel to come up with such a plan, and suggests that it could reinvigorate discussions at ICAO.

However, some environmentalists have been critical of the IATA proposal, saying that rather than providing for a reduction in emissions, it instead allows airlines to buy cheap carbon offsets and thus sustain their massive ecological footprints.

ICTSD reporting; "Industry backs moves to reduce emissions," FINANCIAL TIMES, 16 June 2013; "Historic Agreement' to cut airline emissions fails to impress environmentalists," TRIPLE PUNDIT, 11 June 2013.

Argentine Farmers Strike over Grain Export Curbs, Taxes

Argentina's four main farm unions ended a five-day strike last night, which had been launched in protest against inflation, export curbs, and the government's efforts to increase grain export taxes.

The unions had decided last Saturday to stop selling livestock, corn, and soya bean, with rural leaders terming the strike a "success" three days later. The Rosario grain exchange noted that just over 500 trucks of grain had entered port by mid-Monday, compared to over 3500 by that time a week prior. Argentina is ranked third in the world in exports of soya bean and corn.

"If we don't get any response, that strategy will surely continue," said Ruben Ferrero, President of the Argentine Rural Confederation. Grain growers have argued that the Argentine government's 35 percent tax on soya bean exports, as well as the imposition of

controls on exports of both wheat and corn, are to blame for the loss of competitiveness on the regional level.

However, Argentine Minister of Agriculture Norberto Yauhar said the strike was just an attempt to "generate distress" four months before the country holds its midterm elections.

Argentine farm union leaders are due to decide next week on any subsequent steps. Should the strike continue, corn importers could be particularly affected, given that the world supply of corn relies mainly on Latin American production – particularly after the US' drought last year.

ICTSD reporting; "Movilización del ruralismo en el cuarto día del paro," LA NACIÓN, 19 June 2013; "Es alto el acatamiento al paro del campo y piden endurecer la protesta," LA NACIÓN, 18 June 2013; "Paro del campo: no se operó en los mercados de granos y carne," CLARÍN, 18 June 2013; "Argentine grain sales strike may slow much-needed corn exports," REUTERS, 17 June 2013; "Argentina's planned farm strike could increase corn price," REUTERS, 14 June 2013; "Argentine farmers declare strike a success," FRANCE 24, 17 June 2013.

Serbia WTO Accession Talks Aim for 2013 Completion

Serbia is approaching the WTO accession "finish line," Working Party Chairperson Marie-Claire Swärd Capra of Sweden [said](#) last week, adding that the talks could potentially be completed this year.

Belgrade has been urged to adopt any remaining pieces of domestic legislation by next month. The country will then need to submit this legislation, along with updated Agriculture Supporting Tables (AGSTs) and a Legislative Action Plan. Though the revised draft of its Working Party Report was found to be "technically mature," Swärd Capra said it needs to be revised again in time for the next meeting in order to reflect relevant developments in Serbian law.

Members, meanwhile, were urged to complete any bilateral-level talks currently underway with the Balkan country. Serbia has completed 11 bilateral deals to date and has pledged to approve pending legislative changes soon.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming soon

22-24 June, London, UK. LONDON SYMPOSIUM ON CLIMATE CHANGE. This interdisciplinary symposium brings together academics and professionals from the realms of engineering, health, law, trade, agriculture, nutrition, political science, philosophy, education and the physical and chemical sciences to present papers and engage in discourse relevant to global warming and its effects on human welfare and progress. Participants can either join in as observers or they can present research papers, which would be subsequently peer-reviewed and published. For more details or registration, please click [here](#).

24-25 June, Geneva, Switzerland, UNCTAD PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM: "NEW ECONOMIC APPROACHES FOR A COHERENT POST-2015 AGENDA." This annual outreach event, hosted by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), will bring together government officials, academics, civil society representatives, the private sector, and other interested observers to engage in an interactive discussion addressing developmental challenges beyond 2015 – namely rising inequalities, persistent high unemployment, growing economic insecurity, and environmental disasters. This year's event features a combination of moderated plenary sessions and parallel group sessions led by experts, and the themes of focus are macroeconomic and financial governance as well as trade and investment rules for inclusive and sustainable development. Refer to UNCTAD's [website](#) for further details.

24-28 June, Bangkok, Thailand. WTO/ESCAP NINTH ARTNeT CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR TRADE RESEARCH: "TRADE FLOWS AND TRADE POLICY ANALYSIS". This workshop, hosted jointly by the WTO and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will focus on developing research skills and tools for trade analysis. The event will cover topics such as how to analyse trade flows hands-on using software packages, as well as how to quantify trade policy. In addition, participants will discuss their individual research projects and get feedback. To learn more, click [here](#).

25 June, Bern, Switzerland. MIGRATION, GLOBALISATION AND THE STATE. This public lecture on migration management, organised by the National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR), explores the paradox that states face when managing their migration for strategic gains - opening borders for economic gains versus closing borders over security and political concerns. The lecture will be given by James F. Hollifield, a professor of international political economy who teaches at Southern Methodist University (SMU). For more details, refer to the website [here](#).

26 June, Brussels, Belgium. 2013 STRATEGIC EXPORT CONTROL CONFERENCE. This conference, hosted by the Irish Presidency and the European Commission, will bring together EU export control officials, economic operators, academics, and civil society representatives to discuss dual-use export control issues. This conference will draw on the conclusions made from the 2013 Commission Staff Working Document on strategic export controls, in order to feed into plans for a review of the EU export control system. To register or find out more information, please visit the European Commission's [website](#).

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted [here](#). Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

21 June: 19th Round of the Director General's Consultative Framework Mechanism on Cotton - Cotton Development Assistance

21 June: Working Party on the Accession of Seychelles

24 + 26 June: Trade Policy Review Body - Brazil

25 June: Dispute Settlement Body

27 June: Committee on Government Procurement

27 - 28 June: Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Other Upcoming Events

2 July, Brussels, Belgium. HOW TO ALIGN INCENTIVES FOR GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS ACROSS THE EU, MEMBER STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS? Organised by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), this workshop will illustrate the elements of a test cycle that could enable a better alignment of standards, labelling systems, and transport taxes across the EU. The discussions will also explore the essential characteristics of an EU-wide labelling system that would provide consistent signals to consumers and manufacturers across car markets. Practical ideas for a better alignment of the fiscal incentives will also be discussed. For further details, or to register, please click [here](#).

8-10 July, Geneva, Switzerland. FOURTH GLOBAL REVIEW OF AID FOR TRADE. This year's event, held at the WTO, will focus on the theme "Connecting to Value Chains." The biennial meeting will bring together ministers from developed and developing countries, heads of international agencies and regional organisations, representatives from private sector companies and associations, and an array of trade and development experts. The Review will examine the economic opportunities that trade in value added offers, the constraints that firms in developing, and in particular least developed, countries face in connecting and moving up value chains. Discussions will also address ways that Aid for Trade can assist in this process. The event builds on the results of an extensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) exercise undertaken jointly by the OECD and WTO, in collaboration with various others. More information is available [here](#).

9 July, Geneva, Switzerland. "30 YEARS THAT HAVE CHANGED THE FACE OF WORLD TRADE", "TRADE, COMPETITION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION". Organised by CUTS International, a non-governmental think- and action-tank conducting research and network-based advocacy on various dimensions of trade, regulation, and governance issues, these lectures will feature Pascal Lamy, Director General of the WTO, and Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary General of the UNCTAD, as the main speakers. The sessions will be chaired by Frederic Jenny, Chairman of the OPEC Committee on Competition. Seats are available on a first-come-first serve basis. For more details or to register, please visit their [website](#).

7 August, Washington, DC. "HOW WILL THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TPP) AFFECT AGRICULTURE TRADE?" Organised by the International Agricultural Trade Research

Consortium, the conference focuses on the TPP and its importance in eliminating barriers in agricultural trade. The event is geared toward researchers, industry experts, market participants, and policy analysts. Sessions will address questions on how the TPP stands out compared to other trade deals, the status of the negotiations, and the pact's likely effects on specific agricultural sectors. For more details, please click [here](#).

10-11 September, Beijing, China. ASIA-PACIFIC TRADE FACILITATION FORUM 2013: "TOWARDS MORE EFFICIENT AND INCLUSIVE SUPPLY CHAINS: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR PERSPECTIVES." Attracting two to three hundred participants from 30 countries each year, this annual forum serves as a regional platform for exchanging information, experiences, and practices for trade facilitation in Asia-Pacific, identifying priority areas for regional cooperation and integration, and learning about new tools and services which can increase the efficiency of cross-border transactions. The event is being co-organised by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank. Event organisers hope the gathering can help strengthen regional cooperation and coordination of Aid for Trade and related technical assistance and capacity building in trade facilitation. For more information, please visit their [website](#).

1-3 October 2013, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO PUBLIC FORUM: "EXPANDING TRADE THROUGH INNOVATION AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY." This annual WTO event aims to provide a platform for public debate across a range of trade issues and topics. This year's forum specifically looks at the future of trade in an era of innovation and digitalisation. A call for proposals for sessions is now open, and online registration for attending the event is also available. More information can be found at the Public Forum [website](#).

Resources

NINTH REPORT ON G20 INVESTMENT MEASURES. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (June 2013). This report, which covers the October 2012 to May 2013 period, finds that G-20 members have continued to honour their pledge not to introduce new restrictive policies for international investment. However, the organisations also warn that policymakers should be aware that FDI may not only be limited through formal policy changes, but also through individual administrative decisions and informal public signals that are beyond the report's scope. For more information, or to download the publication, please click [here](#).

APEC-UNCTAD HANDBOOK FOR NEGOTIATORS OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT AGREEMENTS (IIAs). Published by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum (May 2013). A joint UNCTAD-APEC initiative drafted in light of UNCTAD's 2012 Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development (IPFSD), this handbook is meant to serve as a tool for negotiators of international investment treaties, with an objective in assisting them to formulate future investment treaties compatible with their development strategies. It consists of 26 modules, and each is dedicated to explaining a specific provision or issue commonly encountered in international investment agreements – touching on the main approaches and policy options, real-life treaty formulations, and policy implications. The latest global and regional investment trends are also presented in the report. For the full analysis, please click [here](#).

LDC ISSUES FOR BALI – 14 JUNE 2013. Published by the IDEAS Centre (June 2013). This report analyses the issues concerning least developed countries (LDCs) in the ongoing preparations for the WTO's upcoming ministerial conference – namely trade facilitation, agriculture, and special and differential treatment (S&DT)/LDC issues. The author discusses the developments since the Paris mini-ministerial in these areas, such as the impact of the G-20 and G-33 agriculture proposals on the talks, as well as the work being done in trade facilitation and the recent TRIPS extension for LDCs. To read the full report, please click [here](#).

MAPPING OF DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISMS IN REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS – INNOVATIVE OR VARIATIONS ON A THEME? By Claude Chase, Alan Yanovich, Jo-Ann Crawford, and Pamela Ugaz for the WTO (June 2013). This research paper aims to analyse in-depth how the dispute settlement mechanisms (DSMs) in Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) differ from those in the WTO. Specifically, this paper explores the differences in design and functioning of these DSMs. This is done through mapping these DSMs, drawing conclusions from trends, and contrasting their approaches to various issues in international dispute settlement. To download the full report, please click [here](#).

DO PRIVATE STANDARDS ENCOURAGE OR HINDER TRADE AND INNOVATION? By Philipp Aerni for the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) (June 2013). This paper reviews the impact of buyer-driven private standards on trade and innovation by looking at the governance of global value chains (GVC) by private standards. The author argues that business-to-business (B2B) private standards may encourage more sustainable producer practices and reduce uncertainty in GVCs, but they are costly and often not sufficiently responsive to local challenges. The paper also suggests that B2B-based private standards, on the other hand, may have their merits, but need to become

less influenced by advocacy groups that see private standards primarily as a tool to inhibit trade and innovation. To read more, please click [here](#).

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