

BRIDGES WEEKLY

Global trade news from a sustainable development perspective

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 11, 24 MARCH 2016

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TRADE AGREEMENTS

EU, US Trade Chiefs Press for TTIP Advances Despite Election, Brexit Dynamic

Clinching an ambitious bilateral trade and investment pact in the near term remains a key strategic and economic priority, said the US' and EU's top trade officials last week, while acknowledging the ongoing uncertainty that surrounds such efforts given the American presidential election debate on the merits of trade deals and the impending "Brexit" referendum in the UK.

Speaking at the German Marshall Fund's [Brussels Forum](#) on 18 March, EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and US Trade Representative (USTR) Michael Froman both touted the advances that have been made in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) talks to date, which were launched in 2013.

"We've come a long way in the negotiations," the EU trade chief confirmed on Friday, while noting that all elements of the talks are linked.

The two also discussed, however, the difficulties ahead in building public support domestically for this trade pact – among others – on their respective sides of the Atlantic.

The US presidential election, for example, has drawn harsh scrutiny toward trade deals and while these questions have primarily focused on a separate US trade pact in the Pacific, some trade watchers worry that the increasingly polarised discussion could have the ramifications for the North American country's other trade objectives.

Defending the potential gains from TTIP, "we see [the planned agreement] as an important element of a growth strategy for both of us," said Froman, arguing that the deal would be key to raising competitiveness and also promote shared values.

The US trade chief stressed the strategic importance of a trade deal between the trading powers, given other developments affecting both sides. The public statements from the two officials come shortly after the two sides concluded their twelfth round of negotiations, after which they confirmed their goal to clinch a trade deal this year as long as the substance is right. (See Bridges Weekly, [3 March 2016](#))

Two additional TTIP negotiation rounds are expected between now and the summer break, officials confirmed at the time of the last round, with intersessional work planned for in between.

"Brexit" possibility in the background

The looming question of whether a domestic UK referendum on staying – or leaving – the European Union was also addressed during the panel last week, with the US trade chief reiterating past stances regarding what interest level Washington may have in negotiating deals with a Britain outside the EU.

"The question is really up to the British people to decide what they want to do and it's for them to weigh these costs and benefits," said Froman.

"I would say from a trade perspective, from a US perspective, we've made clear that our focus at the moment is on these platform agreements, like TPP and TTIP, that we have not been in the market for FTAs with individual countries," the US trade chief continued. "And I do believe that the UK has a stronger voice when it's part of a larger entity, like the EU."

The referendum is slated for 23 June, and comes in the wake of a British deal with the European Union to revise the terms of its membership in the 28-nation bloc. (See Bridges Weekly, [25 February 2016](#))

TPP debate implications

Both trade chiefs also discussed the prospects for a separate trade deal – the US' agreement with 11 other countries for a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – as efforts to build support and eventually ratify the deal attempt to move ahead.

The 12-country Asia-Pacific pact has come under intense scrutiny in the US election process, as the leading candidates for both the Democratic and Republican Party nominations have called for rejecting the deal and potentially renegotiating its terms. (See Bridges Weekly, [10 March 2016](#))

Malmström, for her part, expressed her hope that the TPP moves forward, even amid the contentious political climate in the United States, given what it may also mean for the EU's own prospects with deepening Asia-Pacific ties.

"We are not just looking at this; we have a very ambitious trade agenda in Asia," she noted, referring as an example the possibility that the EU may again pursue a deal with all ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other countries in the region.

Froman, meanwhile, noted that "the rest of the world is not standing still," adding that the US does not want to be shut out of these various markets in the Asia-Pacific region. "From a pure market access point of view, us failing to move ahead on TPP, and us being on the sidelines while the rest of the world moves ahead, is very deleterious to our economy."

The US trade chief also said that there is "no mutual exclusivity" between what the US and China are trying to respectively achieve in the region, while noting that in the absence of TPP, other agreements may not pursue the same "rules of the road" that Washington and its TPP partners are seeking.

EU publishes additional TTIP documents

Another notable development in the TTIP talks came this week, when the European Commission made public a series of documents relating to the talks as part of its ongoing transparency efforts. These included the EU's revised proposal on regulatory cooperation –

part of the discussions during last month's round – as well as background documents on the subject.

Other documents made public include the 28-nation bloc's textual proposal for trade in goods and a related explanatory document; proposals on [agriculture](#) as well as [wine and spirits](#); a textual proposal on [delivery services](#); an outline proposal on [geographical indications](#); and a proposal for additional articles relating to [customs and trade facilitation](#).

The associated explanatory texts refer to some of the issues that the EU is aiming to address via these proposals.

For example, on agriculture, Brussels is asking to set up a platform for bilateral discussions where issues such as food security and climate change can be discussed; the elimination of export subsidies and disciplines “on measures of equivalent effect” both bilaterally and with third countries with whom both sides have an FTA; and has left a “placeholder” on trade-distorting agricultural domestic support.

“Although it is not a standard EU practice in FTAs to address domestic support, EU stakeholders have expressed concerns about the impact US trade-distorting schemes could have on EU markets in case of trade liberalisation,” the [guide](#) to the agriculture proposal notes.

By the summer, both sides aim to have proposals in all areas involving regulatory issues and rules, as well as meaningful offers in market access for goods, services, and government procurement. They also said in February that they hope to make significant progress in consolidating texts, as part of this planned increase in momentum.

As the talks continue, the months ahead are slated to be pivotal in determining whether the upcoming flurry of TTIP negotiating activity will indeed translate into a completed pact during the Obama presidency – or if this task will fall to his successor.

ICTSD reporting.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Governments Weigh Climate Ambition in Wake of UN Climate Pact

The 28-nation EU last week [urged](#) legislators to move quickly on laws to reduce domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and underlined the need to ratify the Paris Agreement on climate change – a new universal deal clinched last December – as soon as possible.

While welcomed as a positive signal by some stakeholders for timely entry into force of the deal – which requires ratification from 55 nations representing 55 percent of global emissions – countries such as France and Sweden had last month pushed for deepening the EU's target to reduce emissions by 40 percent under 1990 levels by 2030 in light of the Paris outcomes.

This attempt appeared to gain little traction with other members of the bloc, however, reluctant to revisit a compromise target. The EU is responsible for around 10 percent of total emissions.

China, meanwhile, said it would "implement and enhance" its climate strategy in its 13th "Five-Year Plan" released last Thursday. The politically salient document sets the course for the nation's social and economic initiatives, and analysts say that an admission on climate could indicate a ramping up of ambition in this area.

The Five-Year Plan also looks to accelerate the Asian giant's clean energy shift, with [some reports](#) suggesting it will invest a total of RMB 2.3 trillion (US\$353 billion) in renewable sources by 2020, as well as bringing online a new national carbon market, boosting R&D spending, and developing a low-carbon infrastructure.

The world's largest greenhouse gas emitter has committed to peaking carbon dioxide emissions by around 2030, if not sooner; lowering emissions per unit of GDP by 60 to 65 percent from 2005 levels by 2030; and increasing the share of non-fossil fuels in the energy mix to 20 percent by 2030 up from 15 percent in 2020.

Some other major emitters are also wrestling with climate policy initiatives in an effort to build upon the momentum from Paris. The US and Canada have announced plans to work together on a number of climate and energy issues, including by cutting methane emissions from oil and gas sources by 40 to 45 percent below 2012 levels by 2025. (See Bridges Weekly, [17 March 2016](#))

US President Barack Obama is, however, separately facing challenges to his flagship "Clean Power Plan" that aims to slash emissions from the nation's power plants by 32 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The US Supreme Court agreed in February to halt the Environmental Protection Agency's enforcement of the plan until various legal challenges against it – 27 largely Republican-led states are contesting the legality of the executive orders – have been resolved. The legislation is deemed a key part of the US' pledge to reduce emissions by 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025.

Obama is also set to leave office in early 2017, leaving open the question of whether his climate ambitions will be taken on by his successor – or instead scaled back.

Japan, which has promised a 26 percent drop in emissions by 2030 from 2013 levels, has lately indicated it will sign off on a climate strategy by May to meet this aim. The plan will include an 80 percent cut by 2050 as a long term target, officials have said, and likely outline steps to shift the nation's energy mix.

Japan shuttered its fleet of nuclear reactors after the 2011 Fukushima disaster, turning instead to fossil fuel imports to meet energy demands. In recent comments to the media, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe suggested the reactors would need to be restarted in the face of energy security and climate concerns.

Climate, weather hit extremes

News of these various climate policy developments were countered on Monday with the annual release of the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) state of the climate report that documented record-breaking temperature extremes, exceptional rainfall, devastating drought, and unusual tropical cyclone activity in 2015.

"The future is happening now," [said](#) WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas. "The alarming rate of change we are now witnessing in our climate as a result of greenhouse gas emissions is unprecedented in modern records."

Others have warned that such extreme weather will impact basic needs such as food and water supplies. One recent [study](#) published in *Nature Climate Change*, a research journal, finds that climate change could affect around 30 percent of areas in sub-Saharan Africa that grow maize and bananas, and 60 percent for beans, with land eventually becoming unsuitable for cultivating these staples. Bananas and plantains provide around 25 percent of food energy needs for 70 million people in Africa.

As part of the new UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) deal reached in Paris, each nation has submitted a "nationally determined contribution," with these domestically-defined pledges to be revised every five years starting from 2020. Current contributions would only limit temperature rises to 2.7 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, a level experts warn will further increase climate and weather extremes.

The Paris Agreement includes several long-term goals, such as holding temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts for a 1.5 degree cap, reaching a global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, and net emissions by 2050. (See BioRes, [13 December 2015](#))

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has invited world leaders to a signing ceremony for the Paris deal on 22 April. The French Presidency of last year's climate talks is also organising an informal gathering of climate envoys on 15-16 April to help prepare for upcoming UNFCCC sessions in May and November.

The Paris Agreement mandates a number of specific rules, an emissions accounting framework, and other guidelines to be further fleshed out under several subsidiary bodies and working groups.

ICTSD reporting; "EU leaders pass on upping bloc's 2030 climate target," CARBON PULSE, 18 March 2016; "China five-year plan hints at deeper carbon cuts," CLIMATE HOME, 18 March 2016; "100 days since the Paris climate deal: What has changed?" CLIMATE HOME, 20 March 2016; "Japan fleshes out Paris climate change plan," CLIMATE HOME, 15 March 2016.

DISPUTES

Disputes Roundup: US-Mexico Tuna Case Goes to Arbitration, Russia-Ukraine Trade Spat Continues

The past week has seen a series of developments in the realm of trade disputes, with the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) meeting on Wednesday 23 March addressing, among other topics, Mexico's request to suspend concessions to the US in their long-running row over "dolphin-safe" tuna labelling and a Russian request for a panel to hear its anti-dumping duties dispute with Ukraine.

Meanwhile, a new dispute is now underway between two major Asian economies, after Japan filed a request for consultations with Korea on anti-dumping duties that the latter imposes on pneumatic valves.

Tuna dispute advances

The US-Mexico dispute over "dolphin-safe" tuna labelling ([DS381](#)) has now advanced to arbitration, in the next stage of the long-running case.

Prior to Wednesday's DSB meeting, Mexico had circulated a request for authorisation to suspend tariff concessions and other related obligations in goods under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 against the US.

Specifically, Mexico has asked for authorisation to suspend concessions on a list of goods worth US\$472.3 million annually, noting that it would establish such a list "in due course." The US subsequently objected to this figure in a 22 March communication, asking that the matter be referred to arbitration.

The tuna dispute has been ongoing since 2008, with the WTO's Appellate Body confirming in 2012 an earlier panel ruling which deemed the US' dolphin-safe label to discriminate against imported tuna products from Mexico – and therefore being a violation of international trade rules. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 May 2012](#))

Following changes by the US made in July 2013, a WTO compliance panel ruled that the revision of the labelling measure was insufficient to bring it in line with global trade rules – a finding of non-compliance which was later confirmed by the Appellate Body in late 2015. (See Bridges Weekly, [16 April 2015](#))

Under a common understanding reached between the parties in August 2013, both sides have agreed that Mexico can request authorisation for suspending concessions or other obligations under the covered agreements. While the US cannot object to the authorisation request itself – under the terms of their joint understanding – it can object to the level of concessions being sought.

Meanwhile, citing the need to comply with WTO obligations, the US' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a new interim final rule on 22 March, which it said will address the problems raised in last year's Appellate Body ruling.

The new interim final rule was issued without advance notice or the opportunity for public comment, effective immediately, in order to avoid delay that may "adversely affect US

trade as well as the federal government's ability to respond to Mexico's request for authorisation to suspend the application to the US of WTO concessions or other obligations," [according](#) to the notice published in the federal register.

Under the amended regulations, the observer certification standards for dolphin-safe labelling are now made consistent across all fisheries, not just for the Eastern Tropical Pacific. A government certificate validating the catch documentation, segregation, and chain of custody may also be required, if it is determined that a fishery is associated with tuna and dolphins or "regular and significant mortality or serious injury of dolphins."

The interim final rule also provides for one "straightforward certification" to indicate that there was no intentional deployment of fishing gear "used to encircle dolphins during the fishing trip in which the tuna were caught" for all tuna fisheries that may be eligible for the dolphin-safe label.

Other changes include a dolphin-safe training course to be completed by captains in all fisheries; as well as requiring that US processors and importers collect and keep in an available record for two years information on all stages in the chain of custody of the shipment of tuna and tuna products to their point of entry into the US market.

At Wednesday's DSB meeting, Mexico said that it is analysing these changes, particularly given that the new rule was only just announced, sources familiar with the discussions said. Mexico also confirmed that it will still pursue arbitration proceedings, noting also that any new US rules will still take time to implement.

Russia asks for WTO panel in Ukraine anti-dumping dispute

Also on Wednesday, WTO members heard Russia's request – circulated in late February – for the establishment of a panel to hear its dispute with Ukraine over the latter's definitive anti-dumping measures on ammonium nitrate, a product which is often used as fertiliser ([DS493](#)).

The request was rejected by Ukraine at the meeting. Under WTO rules, a respondent to a dispute can reject a first panel request. However, upon a second request from a complainant, a panel is automatically established.

The disagreement between the two countries dates back to 2014, when Ukraine decided to extend an existing anti-dumping measure initially imposed in 2008 for an additional term of five years. The measure, which resulted from interim and expiry reviews, allegedly also raised the customs duty on imports of ammonium nitrate from Russia from 11.91 to 36.03 percent.

Russia requested consultations with Ukraine last May, claiming that the measure is inconsistent with a series of provisions of the WTO's Anti-Dumping Agreement and the GATT 1994. Consultations were then held in June of last year. (See Bridges Weekly, [13 May 2015](#))

Japan initiates dispute against Korea

Just last week, a new dispute arrived at the global trade body, with Japan requesting consultations with Korea (DS504) over the latter's imposition of anti-dumping duties on pneumatic valves from Japan.

Tokyo claims that there were certain flaws in Seoul's methodology when determining the injury caused to its domestic market by the imports of allegedly dumped Japanese pneumatic valves. Other questions raised are the causal link between the allegedly dumped imports and this injury, as well as the investigation procedures involved in determining the duties.

South Korean authorities began the anti-dumping investigation in 2014 in order to assess whether valves for pneumatic transmission imported from Japan were being dumped – in other words, sold in the importing country at prices below their normal value.

Following findings of dumping, Japan says, Korean authorities began imposing anti-dumping duties on Japanese exporters of such goods at a rate of 11.66 to 22.77 percent for a term of five years, starting in August 2015.

Japan's exports of pneumatic valves to Korea were worth approximately ¥6.3 billion in 2014 (US\$56.5 million at today's exchange rate), [according to the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry](#).

In its complaint, Japan cites various provisions of the Anti-Dumping Agreement and the GATT 1994. The former allows importing countries to impose duties in proven instances of dumping, so long as this dumping is shown to cause injury to domestic industry and that there is a causal link between the two. The rules also outline how such anti-dumping investigations must be conducted.

Among other concerns, Tokyo says that Seoul's analysis of the volume effects, the price effects, and the impact of the imports under investigation on its domestic industry was flawed, as it did not involve an "objective examination based on positive evidence," as required by WTO anti-dumping rules.

Japan also argues that Korea did not prove that the injury to domestic industry was the result of dumping, while not considering other reasons that could explain the injury and incorrectly attributing the effects of other known factors to the imports under investigation.

The document also outlines various procedural concerns, such as issues relating to confidentiality and the provision of information.

Korea and Japan must now hold consultations for a minimum of 60 days in an effort to resolve their differences. Should a mutually agreed solution not be reached during that time, Japan may then request that a WTO panel be established to hear the case.

ICTSD reporting.

EUROPEAN UNION

EU Trade Chief Outlines Potential Factors in China "Non-Market Economy" Status Decision

The debate over whether to change China's designation as a "non-market economy" in anti-dumping investigations continues on in Europe, with EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström telling a Brussels audience last week that none of the options available is "cost-free."

The European Commission is meant to take a decision in the second half of this year on the subject, having postponed an earlier announcement in order to conduct additional analysis on the ramifications and to hold a public consultation. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 February 2016](#))

The need to chart a path forward, meanwhile, has become increasingly urgent due to a series of factors. One is the question of how to interpret the terms of China's accession protocol to the WTO. When the Asian economy joined the organisation in 2001, it agreed to terms regarding how to address price comparability when determining subsidies and dumping, among others.

Outlined in Section 15 of the document, these terms allow for China's fellow WTO members to treat the country as a non-market economy in anti-dumping probes, specifically as it relates to determining price comparability under Article VI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 and the WTO's Anti-Dumping Agreement.

While WTO members are directed to use Chinese prices or costs if the producers being investigated can demonstrate that market economy conditions "prevail" in their industry, according to subparagraph (a)(i) of that section, the next subparagraph provides for an alternative scenario should this not be the case.

Specifically, subparagraph (a)(ii) reads as follows: "The importing WTO Member may use a methodology that is not based on a strict comparison with domestic prices or costs in China if the producers under investigation cannot clearly show that market economy conditions prevail in the industry producing the like product with regard to manufacture, production and sale of that product."

Later in that section, subparagraph (d) notes that the provisions of subparagraph (a) "shall be terminated" once Beijing has established under an importing member's domestic laws "that it is a market economy."

However, the remaining part of that same subparagraph (d) then go on to note that, "In any event, the provisions of subparagraph (a)(ii) shall expire 15 years after the date of accession. In addition, should China establish, pursuant to the national law of the importing WTO Member, that market economy conditions prevail in a particular industry or sector, the non market economy provisions of subparagraph (a) shall no longer apply to that industry or sector."

The wording of this section, given that China is approaching its 15th anniversary as a WTO member, has sparked debate as to whether China should automatically be treated as a market economy in such probes from then onward or not.

Meanwhile, various industry groups in the EU, including in the steel and solar sectors, have argued strongly against revising China's non-market economy designation in European legislation, warning that doing so would hamper the EU's trade defence instruments and could put domestic jobs at increased risk. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 February 2016](#))

Indeed, earlier this month the European Commission released a [communication](#) in which it outlined various actions – both existing and forthcoming – that it planned to take in order to address the difficulties that the steel sector is said to face. (See Bridges Weekly, [17 March 2016](#))

These include in the conducting of trade remedy probes, such as by opening investigations in response to threat of injury to domestic industry; registering imports before provisional measures are imposed in order to provide “actual relief” to EU producers earlier in the process; and to use “the available margins to further accelerate the adoption of provisional measures.”

For the steel sector alone, the Commission has 37 anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures in place on imports from abroad, with 16 of these involving Chinese exporting producers. New investigations into several Chinese-made steel products were announced just last month. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 February 2016](#))

Malmström: More analysis needed

The EU trade chief, in her remarks last week, gave an initial overview of some of the risks – and unanswered questions – she currently foresees for the different options on the table.

These options, as described in the ongoing public consultation released earlier this year, involve either leaving EU anti-dumping legislation in its current state; revising it; or to both make revisions and also take complementary measures to mitigate possible adverse impacts. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 February 2016](#))

“Many of you, I know, believe that the first option is the best. Why would we do anything that might weaken our trade defence system?” she said, referring to the possibility of not making any changes to EU anti-dumping policy.

However, she warned that this could lead to China lodging WTO disputes against the EU, which the 28-nation bloc might not necessarily win – a potentially costly move with uncertain implications for investment and other areas.

“We are here because of the text of China's protocol of accession to the WTO. And while there may be many views on what that text says, there is no doubt that some of its provisions will expire at the end of the year. And there is even less doubt about the interpretation China gives to this,” she said.

Regarding the second option, she called for a greater discussion of how importing cheaper inputs to be used in EU production processes could actually have some benefits that have not yet been properly estimated.

“And there has been very little discussion at all of the third option I have outlined. Many of you will have dismissed it out of hand. But I think it's something we all need to look at carefully,” she said, highlighting some of the current provisions of EU anti-dumping legislation and the value of conducting a thorough impact assessment as a result.

No decision yet

Malmström stressed that the Commission is still weighing options, benefits, and costs, and that the EU executive arm is not at a stage where it can make a decision.

"The Commission wants an EU trade policy that creates a level playing field and opportunities for workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs. As the world's largest trading economy, the best way to do that is by opening markets around the world and keeping our own open as well," she said.

However, she continued, "there is no inconsistency between a policy of openness and maintaining a strong and effective trade defence system," noting that the latter is key for such an open bloc as the EU.

"We can't ask our workers or entrepreneurs to compete against unfair trading practices. We need to be able to take effective action at EU level when that action is needed," she said.

ICTSD reporting.

DISPUTES

EU, Mercosur Set to Ramp Up Trade Talks, Exchange Offers in April

The EU and the South American customs bloc Mercosur are set to ramp up their negotiations for a trade agreement between them in the coming months, following a prolonged stall.

Over the past few weeks, high-level officials have held a series of meetings in a bid to move the talks forward. This included a visit to the Argentine capital by Federica Mogherini, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, earlier this month, where she met with Mauricio Macri, the new Argentine president who took office late last year.

The change in government in Buenos Aires – following the controversial eight-year tenure of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, who was herself preceded in office by her late husband, Néstor Kirchner – has sparked hopes among some of the country's trading partners that there may be efforts on the horizon to pursue more open economic policies.

Regarding the plan to exchange market access offers next month, Mogherini told reporters after her discussions with Macri that it is "an ambitious and realistic goal."

"After such a long negotiation, we have to make sure that all the right steps are taken. The offers have to be credible and substantial," she said, according to remarks reported by the Buenos Aires Herald.

Separately, Argentine trade minister Miguel Braun told domestic news agency Clarín that his country is "prepared" to make concessions in the talks, seeing where Buenos Aires might be able to strike a balance that would compensate any losses faced by domestic sectors in the deal.

Years in the making

The EU-Mercosur trade talks were re-launched nearly six years ago, after having stalled in 2004. The original negotiations – which are part of a broader effort to set up a region-to-region Association Agreement between the two sides – date back to 1999. (See Bridges Weekly, [19 May 2010](#))

After the resumption of talks, the two blocs held a series of negotiating rounds; however, the talks since have struggled to make headway, with no formal round having been held since late 2012. (See Bridges Weekly, [31 October 2012](#))

While areas such as agricultural market access have long been stumbling blocks for the two sides, much of the recent slowdown in negotiations had been attributed to differences within the Mercosur bloc on how to proceed.

Reportedly, the possibility of pursuing trade negotiations on "different speeds" had been raised within the group, which would potentially have allowed Mercosur countries to advance the talks without Argentina if necessary. However, the suggestions had prompted questions both over whether this would be permissible under the South American customs bloc's rules, and also whether the EU would be amenable to dealing with the group's members individually.

Earlier target dates for exchanging offers had also been floated, with ministers last year expressing their aim of exchanging market access offers during the last quarter of 2015. (See Bridges Weekly, [18 June 2015](#))

US-Argentina relations thaw?

Changes may also be on the horizon for Argentina's ties with another major trading partner, the United States, with US President Barack Obama paying the country [a visit](#) from 23-24 March to meet with Macri, immediately after stopping in Havana for a landmark meeting with Cuban President Raúl Castro.

Prior to the meet with Macri, a [statement](#) from the White House Press Secretary pegged trade, investment, renewable energy, and climate change issues as among those that would feature in Obama's discussions with the Argentine President.

In an interview with the Wall Street Journal ahead of the meet, the Argentine President argued that his country has been "isolated from the world" in recent years, criticising the populist policies of his predecessors and stressing the importance of tackling Argentina's economic challenges rapidly.

"We have to create jobs and attract investment," he told the news outlet, adding that his goal is to lift as many of his country's citizens out of poverty as possible, within a short timespan.

ICTSD reporting; "Braun y el acuerdo UE-Mercosur: "Argentina está dispuesta a hacer concesiones"," CLARÍN, 16 March 2016; "EU visit speeds up trade talks with Mercosur," BUENOS AIRES HERALD, 10 March 2016; "Mogherini apuesta por avance firme hacia acuerdo UE-Mercosur," EL PAÍS, 10 March 2016; "Under President Mauricio Macri, Argentina Shows a New Face for Obama Visit," THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 22 March 2016.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

24 March, London, UK, and online. This event, organised by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), will feature various climate and development experts who will discuss the relationship between climate change, disasters, and poverty. The discussants will connect these issues with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). For more information, and to watch the event webcast online, please visit the following [webpage](#).

30 March, Washington, US. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: THE ROLE OF EVALUATION. This Brookings Institution event will feature Gayle Smith, Administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), who will discuss the implications from the adoption of USAID's formal policy on evaluation since 2011. During the discussion, Smith will note the benefits and difficulties from this practice, as well as how to use such evaluations for future learning, among other topics. More information about the event is available [here](#).

31 March, Washington, US. LAUNCH OF IFPRI'S 2016 GLOBAL FOOD POLICY REPORT. This event, organised by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), will feature high-level speakers from IFPRI, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and the World Resources Institute (WRI). The meeting will serve as the launch of this year's report from IFPRI on the latest developments in global food policy, including food loss and waste; the need for more resilient food systems; and other key topics. More information about the event is available [here](#).

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.

4 + 6 April: Trade Policy Review Body – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

5-6 April: Committee on Regional Trade Agreements

Other Upcoming Events

3 April, Nanjing, China. KEY POLICY OPTIONS FOR THE G20 TO SUPPORT ROBUST INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT WORKSHOP. This invitation-only event is being organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), in partnership with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The event aims to foster a discussion among leading thinkers regarding trade and investment, particularly in the lead-up to this year's G20 summit, which is being held under the Chinese presidency. The workshop will address these areas: investment cooperation, the multilateral trading system, the inclusiveness of global value chains, and boosting trade growth. More information is available [here](#).

7 April, Geneva, Switzerland. TALKING DISPUTES: THE INDIA-SOLAR CELLS DISPUTE. Organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and WTI Advisors, this event will discuss the recent WTO panel report on India's domestic content requirements for solar power. Please note that registration for the event is mandatory. The meeting will also be streamed online on the event page, with online viewers invited to submit questions through Twitter using the following hashtags/handles: #TalkingDisputes, @ICTSDTradeLaw, and @WTIAdvisors. More information is available [here](#).

18 May, Vaduz, Liechtenstein. EUROPEAN GREEN INDIA SUMMIT 2016. This event, organised by the Liechtenstein Institute for Strategic Development and Panitek AG, will focus on green infrastructure and urban development. The event, which aims to foster an exchange of ideas between stakeholders from the EU and India, will bring together high-level officials from the private and public sectors as speakers. Supporters include the Swiss India Chamber of Commerce and the Swiss India Business Forum. Please note that registration is open until 15 April. To learn more, visit the following [website](#) or write to kirsten.steinhofer@uni.li.

6-7 June, Copenhagen, Denmark. GLOBAL GREEN GROWTH FORUM 2016. This event, hosted by the Global Green Growth Forum (3GF), will focus on a sub-set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are specifically focused on green growth, including those relevant to energy, sustainable production and consumption, and cities, among others. Over 250 top leaders from a range of sectors invited by the Prime Minister of Denmark will attend to discuss options for collaboration to reach these goals. The summit aims to turn 2016 into a year that transforms SDGs from promises into concrete plans for future growth. More information about the event can be found [here](#).

20-21 October, Pisa, Italy. 2016 AGLAW COLLOQUIUM. This event is being organised by the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna in Pisa and the Institute of Law, Politics, and Development, under the theme "Agri-Food and Environmental Regulatory Agenda in Regional Trade Agreements: Legal Implications and Trends." Proposals are currently being accepted for the conference, with submission forms due on 16 May and the paper draft deadline set for 25 September. More details are available [here](#).

Resources

POVERTY IN A RISING AFRICA. Published by the World Bank (March 2016). This new report is the first of two that the World Bank has for the coming months on poverty in Africa, with the findings suggesting that poverty levels may be lower than what has been noted in recent estimates, but at the same time noting that significant poverty challenges remain and the number of those who still live in circumstances of extreme poverty has increased over the past couple of decades. One of the key points made by the authors is the importance of having better data to inform decision-making processes. To learn more or to access the report, click [here](#).

RENMINBI SERIES PART 1: A PRIMER ON CHINA'S CURRENCY. By Sean Miner for the Peterson Institute for International Economics (March 2016). This post is the first in a planned series on China's currency, the yuan renminbi. This edition aims to provide some background on key issues relating to the currency, particularly in light of Beijing's efforts to "internationalise" the currency. The post is available [here](#), with subsequent updates to be published [here](#).

OECD ECONOMIC SURVEYS: GREECE 2016. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (March 2016). This annual update provides a review of the latest economic developments and upcoming changes for Greece, including in areas such as export growth and structural reform. The publication can be accessed [here](#).

BRUSSELS BRIEFING ON AGRICULTURE: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR MARCH 2016. Published by viEUws (March 2016). This latest edition of viEUws' "Brussels Briefing on Agriculture" brings together AGRA FACTS journalists to review topics ranging from the EU-Mercosur trade negotiations to the European Commission's efforts to address the difficulties that the bloc's farm sector is said to face. The full video is available [here](#).

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PUBLISHED BY



**International Centre for Trade
and Sustainable Development**

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Bridges Weekly Trade News is made possible
through generous contributions of donors and
partners including

**DFID - UK Department for
International Development**

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This edition of Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest
is edited by Sofia Alicia Baliño.

The Publisher and Director is Ricardo Meléndez-
Ortiz. The Editor in Chief is Andrew Crosby.
Comments and suggestions are welcomed and
should be directed to the [editor](#) or the [director](#).

Price: €10.00

ISSN 1563-0

