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TRADE AGREEMENTS

TTIP Negotiators Reiterate
2016 Goal, While Noting
Market Access Gaps.....1

UNITED STATES

US Republican Party Platform
Outlines Trade Approach,
Lambasts Obama Climate
Agenda.....6

GLOBAL ECONOMY

EU Commission Outlines
Overall Plan to Revise Anti-
Dumping Investigations10

AGRICULTURE

WTO Agriculture Talks: Chair
Urges Shift from Reflection to
Action13

DISPUTES

US, EU File WTO Challenges
Against Chinese Export
Restrictions on Raw Materials16

UNITED KINGDOM

Following Leadership Change,
UK Officials Test Waters on
Future Trade Deals.....18

TRADE AGREEMENTS

EU, Indonesia Set to Begin
Trade Talks21

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events23
Resources25

TRADE AGREEMENTS

TTIP Negotiators Reiterate 2016 Goal, While Noting Market Access Gaps

US and EU officials reaffirmed last week that they still aim to clinch a bilateral trade and investment pact this year, while acknowledging that much work remains in areas such as market access following the latest round of negotiations in Brussels, Belgium.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations have been underway for three years, having been launched in July 2013. Including last week's meetings in Brussels, the two sides have held 14 formal negotiating rounds to date, along with ministerial-level stocktakings and intersessional discussions. (See Bridges Weekly, [4 July 2016](#))

Over that time, the geopolitical context has evolved significantly, as has the domestic political climate on trade. The US is now in the middle of an election year, which will see a new president installed in the White House in January. Meanwhile, the EU is facing its own challenges in light of the recent "Brexit" vote in the UK, as well as heavy public scrutiny of trade deals within a larger debate on the merits of globalisation. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 July 2016](#))

Chief negotiators from both sides referred to these dynamics in their closing press conference on Friday, particularly the "Brexit" situation, while stating that these challenges are indeed a reaffirmation of the need for an ambitious, comprehensive bilateral accord.

"We know this is a challenging year for Europe, in the midst of several challenging years. Brexit affects anew the calculations of everyone, but we are convinced that the strategic and economic rationale for TTIP remains strong," said US chief negotiator Dan Mullaney.

EU chief negotiator Ignacio García Bercero similarly affirmed that the Brexit vote "in no way would delay the TTIP negotiations" nor harm the determination behind them.

TTIP light “not an option”

The two officials confirmed on Friday that some key elements of what a final TTIP will look like are beginning to become clearer, even with much work remaining. For example, they indicated that the deal will have approximately 30 chapters in total, with negotiators now working off of “consolidated texts” in many chapters.

The efforts at consolidating these texts further will continue throughout the summer, they added. Examples of areas under the overall heading of “regulatory cooperation” where the two sides are now using consolidated texts are technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), among others.

Responding to questions on whether the pace of the talks could mean that they miss their 2016 target for completing the deal, both officials said that they have the support of their respective leaders to keep pressing for an outcome this year. They qualified that statement, however, by insisting that meeting this goal would not come at the expense of the substance, and that a “TTIP-light” is not an option they would consider.

Should they be unable to conclude TTIP in 2016, the US and EU would aim to reach a deal within a “reasonable timeframe,” said García Bercero.

Concurring with his European counterpart, Mullaney said that while 2016 remains the “prime objective,” the impending political transitions over the coming years both in the US and in some EU member states could mean that it would be “quite a while before you pick up the negotiations again.”

Tariffs

The TTIP talks are divided into three overarching areas: market access, regulatory cooperation, and rules on certain trade topics. Within market access, those talks address goods, services, and public procurement.

On goods, the US and EU have already exchanged two offers to date, and confirmed after the second exchange that their respective market access offers each covered 97 percent of tariff lines. Officials lauded the achievement at the time as a significant milestone in the negotiations. (See Bridges Weekly, [29 October 2015](#))

Statements by the two chief negotiators last week indicated that while there has been some progress in their talks on goods since then, there is still more work to be done to reach their desired levels of ambition.

Tariffs between the two sides are already low, averaging at around three percent; however, estimates have suggested that getting rid of them entirely could still yield significant gains, given the high “tariff peaks” in some key products.

“It is urgent that we start discussions on the remaining three percent of tariff lines,” said Mullaney on Friday, noting that the two sides had set tariff elimination as their original TTIP goal. “As with every issue in this negotiation, the US has been actively seeking engagement.”

Meanwhile, García Bercero said that the remaining three percent are part of the “end game” of talks – in other words, at the time when the toughest political decisions are made – and that the two sides are currently looking at the tariff lines already covered in the existing offers in order to speed up the timing of phasing out those tariffs.

The EU official also raised agriculture as a specific area where his side is seeking more progress. “We... have yet to find balance within the agricultural silo between the progress on tariffs and the progress on other issues important to the EU, such as geographical indications and wines.”

Geographical indications are an EU priority, he added, telling reporters that Washington and Brussels still remain “far apart.”

Mullaney, [in response to questions](#) on the subject, commented that the US' system for protecting geographical indications is “fairly robust,” and one that is already working in favour of European producers who export goods such as cheese or sparkling wine to the US.

“Exports of agricultural products from the United States to the world keep increasing, but to Europe are flat or declining. That's the context in which we're having this conversation,” said the US official.

Services

Mullaney and García Bercero both indicated that making advances in services market access remains a key objective for their respective sides, but that these talks also have room for improvement. The two sides have exchanged offers on services market access twice over the past three years. (See Bridges Weekly, [23 July 2015](#))

“We both agree on the importance of the ambitious outcome, which goes beyond what we have achieved so far in our existing agreements, in particular as regards improvements on market access,” said García Bercero.

His US counterpart went into additional detail, calling for more progress in both services and investment and warning that the talks so far have been “noticeably and painfully slow.”

Mullaney indicated that the services discussions were continuing into this week, partly due to the fact that a separate negotiating round with various other WTO members for a plurilateral Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) was also underway. Both the EU and the US are participants in the TISA talks, along with 21 other countries, with the group aiming to conclude a deal this year.

Notably, this TTIP round saw the EU put forward its [market access offer on financial services](#), an area where Brussels had earlier said it could not make an offer without seeing the US agree to including language on financial services regulatory cooperation.

García Bercero stressed on Friday that the decision to table this offer did not mean that Brussels was abandoning this objective. The ambition for “anchoring” regulatory cooperation on financial services in TTIP “remains exactly as it was.”

“The reason we have taken this step is the recognition of the fact that there has been very good discussion” between EU and US officials that would soon see some advances in this area outside of TTIP, he explained to reporters.

The US' view on the addressing financial services regulatory cooperation in forums outside of TTIP also remains unchanged, Mullaney confirmed, citing the “excellent cooperation” between the US Treasury Department and the EU's Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services, and Capital Markets Union (DG FISMA).

A few days later, the EU and US [announced](#) that they have agreed on various “improvements” to their Financial Markets Regulatory Dialogue, a bilateral forum that has been in place for well over a decade. The discussions on this subject were held outside the TTIP framework, though are focused specifically on regulatory cooperation in financial services between the two trading partners.

The planned changes to this “dialogue” are not legally binding in any way, the document notes, while stressing that the US and EU must undertake “even more purposeful bilateral regulatory cooperation” in order to keep rebuilding confidence and ensure financial stability.

The talks on this subject were held between the European Commission and the US Treasury Department, with the dialogue now operating under the new name of “Joint EU-US Financial Regulatory Forum” and including among its participants “all relevant regulatory and supervisory bodies” – including when needed those from individual EU member states.

This would serve as a “platform for enabling regulatory cooperation as early as practicable in our respective law-making and rule-making processes,” helping to increase transparency and make their standards more compatible where appropriate, among other goals.

The document outlines various other possible activities for the forum, such as information sharing, and stresses that these talks will not limit Washington nor Brussels from putting in place legal or regulatory steps “that it considers appropriate.”

The US Treasury Secretary and the European Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services, and the Capital Markets Union are also due to meet annually under this agreement.

The agreement included an exchange of letters between US Treasury Secretary [Jack Lew](#) and [Valdis Dombrovskis](#), Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, also in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services, and Capital Markets Union. In their respective letters, both officials stated that these developments were not linked to the ongoing TTIP talks.

Government procurement

The third pillar on market access – government procurement – has only seen one exchange of offers so far, which was done earlier this year. (See Bridges Weekly, [3 March 2016](#)). On this subject as well, negotiators indicated that more work is needed.

Specifically, García Bercero told reporters that the EU is pushing the US to table a more ambitious offer, in order for TTIP to see “substantial improvements in market access at all levels of government.”

“Indeed, the gap between the level of ambition on tariffs and procurement remains a serious cause for concern,” said the EU official.

However, Mullaney characterised the US offer as being “the most ambitious procurement offer it has ever made in any trade agreement, including in TPP,” referring to the 12-country Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement that was signed earlier this year.

E-commerce talks, climate and energy

The European Commission's adoption earlier this month of an “adequacy decision” for a final Data Privacy Shield to replace the Safe Harbour Framework – which governed the transfer of data between US and EU companies – was welcomed by the US as opening the door for deeper talks on digital trade. (See Bridges Weekly, [14 July 2016](#))

“Now that Privacy Shield is coming into force, we look forward to having a full discussion of electronic commerce obligations on data flows and the location of computing facilities. Our inability even to discuss these obligations, which are vital to digital trade, has been unfortunate,” said Mullaney.

In addition, whether the EU and US will include a separate TTIP chapter on energy and raw materials also remains undecided, officials confirmed on Friday.

While Brussels has now put forward [a proposed text](#) for such a chapter, Mullaney told reporters that the US is still examining whether the issues tabled in that document are already addressed in other TTIP chapters – along with whether these should be included in the context of this trade deal and in what form.

"No decision has been taken with respect to the architecture of whether or not there will be an energy chapter," said Mullaney.

The EU proposal is publicly available online, with García Bercero highlighting to reporters the provisions relating to "green innovations" as well as "trade in green technologies," along with advocating for the US to remove export licenses on liquefied natural gas.

He also spoke about the criticism raised by some environmental groups earlier this month in response to a purported leak of the EU's proposal for an energy chapter, suggesting that these interpretations may have been incorrect.

"Contrary to what some claimed this week, it doesn't undermine EU climate objectives, but on the contrary, it strengthens it. And of course EU governments will retain full right to promote their desired energy mix in the way they see fit," said the EU official.

García Bercero also cited the sections in the proposal relating to energy efficiency and renewables, and argued that the EU's suggestions are in line with both its international commitments under the Paris Agreement as well as the bloc's own legislation.

The EU also put forward last week a proposed text on [trade and climate change](#), which it has suggested adding to the planned chapter on sustainable development.

ICTSD reporting.

UNITED STATES

US Republican Party Platform Outlines Trade Approach, Lambasts Obama Climate Agenda

The Republican National Convention (RNC) adopted the final version of its ["platform"](#) document on Monday, outlining the party's overall approach for the general election on issues ranging from trade and the economy to climate change and the environment.

The 66-page document was adopted during the first day of the 18-21 July convention, which is being held in Cleveland, Ohio. Delegates have now also confirmed real estate mogul Donald Trump as the party's nominee for president – despite open protests on the floor of the convention centre earlier this week against the controversial candidate.

Trump is slated to square off against Democratic candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton this autumn, with the election scheduled for Tuesday 8 November. Clinton is expected to be confirmed as her party's nominee during next week's Democratic National Convention.

Overarching principles

The preamble of the Republican Party platform establishes a narrative which argues that the past eight years of a Democratic White House have left the country with a weakened economy and lowered clout on the international stage.

"This platform lays out – in clear language – the path to making America great and united again," the document says, outlining a series of areas where the Republican Party claims the country is worse off than when US President Barack Obama took office in January 2009.

"The President has been regulating to death a free market economy that he does not like and does not understand. He defies the laws of the United States by refusing to enforce those with which he does not agree," says the document's preamble.

The platform is then split into six chapters which touch upon various social, economic, and environmental topics. Though non-binding, the final result has moved the party further to the right in many respects compared to the 2012 version – thus helping set the stage for an extremely heated presidential contest as Democrats attempt to defend Obama's legacy of progressive policymaking and advocacy, while fighting for Clinton to win office.

Trade: China, lame-duck votes, and the "Reagan Economic Zone"

The Republican Party platform devotes a section to trade within a larger chapter entitled "Restoring the American Dream," where it stresses that trade plays a vital role in the country's economic prospects going forward.

The platform revives an idea of a so-called "Reagan Economic Zone," which it characterises as a "worldwide multilateral agreement among nations committed to the principles of open markets." The same economic zone was referred to in the party's [2012 platform](#), when Mitt Romney ran as the Republican nominee. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 September 2012](#))

As in 2012, the document does not explain the relationship between this proposed multilateral "zone" and the existing World Trade Organization, which already provides the framework for the current multilateral trading system.

When Romney proposed this economic zone a year before the 2012 RNC, [he described it](#) as a “partnership among countries committed to free enterprise and free trade,” setting among its objectives the advocacy of trade liberalisation for both goods and services, as well as tougher trade enforcement.

The new 2016 platform rails against the outgoing Obama Administration's approach to trade negotiations and enforcement, claiming that Democratic Party leadership in this area has been sorely lacking.

“We need better negotiated trade agreements that put America first,” the platform says, calling for accords with “friendly democracies” and warning against those that “do not adequately protect US interests, US sovereignty, or when they are violated with impunity.”

On enforcement, the platform raises familiar concerns over the need to protect US intellectual property and tackle alleged “currency manipulation” by China – issues that have also been raised by the Democratic Party. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 July 2016](#))

One of the major questions heading into the final stretch before the convention was how the party would balance their nominee's strong opinions against certain major trade deals with the long-standing support by establishment Republicans of those same accords.

Ultimately, the document avoids referring to any specific trade deals by name, unlike Trump, who has pledged to withdraw the US as a signatory to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement. The Republican nominee also said last month that he would insist upon a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico – or leave that trade deal as well. (See Bridges Weekly, [30 June 2016](#))

Trump's stance on trade has put him at odds with the previously stated positions of his running mate, Indiana Governor Mike Pence, who has long been an advocate of the TPP. The vice-presidential candidate has lately sought to tone down his TPP support since being announced as Trump's pick on Friday.

“I think when we elect one of the best negotiators in the world as president of the United States I'm open to renegotiating these trade agreements,” said Pence last weekend.

Indeed, the platform stresses the value of a tough negotiating approach to trade, one that threatens withdrawal from trade talks and other actions depending on the reactions of other countries at the table.

“Republicans understand that you can succeed in a negotiation only if you are willing to walk away from it. A Republican president will insist on parity in trade and stand ready to implement countervailing duties if other countries refuse to cooperate,” says the platform.

The document also cautions against “rushing” or otherwise pursuing the ratification of “significant trade agreements” in a so-called “lame duck Congress” – in other words, between the general election in November and when the new president and Congress take office on 20 January 2017. Obama Administration officials have suggested that a vote on the TPP could be held then, given the tough political climate prior to the election. Clinton has similarly advocated against a “lame duck” vote. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 May 2016](#))

Climate: Platform calls for ending UNFCCC funding

The platform's wording on climate change is contained within a broader chapter entitled “America's Natural Resources: Agriculture, Energy, and the Environment.” Throughout this section, the party openly takes aim at the Obama Administration's efforts on both the domestic and international stages to address the issue.

Indeed, Obama has actively worked to cement his climate legacy during his second term, whether through pushing for ambitious international deals or enacting domestic environmental regulations to lower climate pollutants, such as carbon and methane.

The Republican Party document states its intent to dismantle much of this work, claiming that climate change is not the “pressing national security issue” that the Obama Administration and myriad experts have long deemed it to be.

The 2012 platform had only referred to climate change in passing, specifically criticising the Obama Administration’s emphasis on the issue as a “severe threat” in national security. The 2016 document goes much further, devoting several paragraphs to its planned response.

At the international level, the 2016 platform threatens ending financial support to the UN agencies and initiatives which lead on climate action.

“We demand an immediate halt to US funding for the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in accordance with the 1994 Foreign Relations Authorization Act,” says the document, citing the language in that legislation that purportedly prevents the US from giving money to any UN body that recognises Palestine as a state.

The Republican Party document warns that providing financial support to either the UNFCCC or to the Green Climate Fund would therefore be “illegal.” The latter is designed to help developed countries set aside US\$100 billion in public and private finance annually by 2020 for tackling climate change. (See Bridges Weekly, [22 May 2014](#))

Platform rejects Kyoto, Paris climate deals

The document also tackles both the current and planned international climate regimes – in other words, the Kyoto Protocol that is in place through 2020, and the Paris Agreement that was adopted in late 2015 and signed this year.

While the US [never ratified](#) the Kyoto Protocol, it did take a leading role in advocating for the Paris deal, which is the first universal accord on climate change. This effort included diplomatic cooperation with other major emitters, such as China, in the process leading up to the final agreement, with Obama pledging that his country will ratify the new deal this year. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 April 2016](#))

“We reject the agendas of both the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, which represent only the personal commitments of their signatories; no such agreement can be binding upon the United States until it is submitted to and ratified by the Senate,” says the Republican Party document.

Clean Power Plan in the cross-hairs

At the domestic level, the platform warns against “top-down, command-and-control regulations that stifle economic growth and cost thousands of jobs,” in an apparent reference to executive actions aimed at tackling emissions, including the Clean Power Plan.

The Clean Power Plan is cited by name earlier in the document, where it is described as the “centrepiece of the President’s war on coal,” with the Republican Party threatening that it would do away with the scheme entirely and instead praising coal as a “clean” energy resource. The plan already hit a major setback when the US Supreme Court stopped its enforcement pending the resolution of several legal challenges. The scheme envisioned the reduction of emissions from US power plants by 32 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, with states given leeway to determine how to do so. (See Bridges Weekly, [5 June 2014](#) and [11 February 2016](#))

The party document also says that it would approve the Keystone XL pipeline, a proposed project that would transport oil from Canada to the US state of Nebraska. Obama and the State Department formally denied a presidential permit for building the pipeline last year, following years of deliberations on how the project would affect climate change, the environment, and US energy security. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 November 2015](#))

"After years of delay, the President killed it to satisfy environmental extremists. We intend to finish that pipeline and others as part of our commitment to North American energy security," says the Republican Party document.

The platform reaffirms the party's stance against carbon taxes, despite the growing support at the international level for such pricing policies, particularly in the wake of the Paris Agreement. The [decision](#) accompanying the Paris accord includes a specific reference to carbon pricing as one tool for "providing incentives for emission reduction activities." (See Bridges Weekly, [28 April 2016](#), and BioRes, [13 December 2015](#))

The document instead touts the value of carbon capture and sequestration technology, which takes the carbon that is produced in power generation and manufacturing, compresses it for transport, and then injects it into underground rock formations. On this subject, as with developing renewable energy sources, the text calls upon private companies to take the lead in this area.

Energy, rare earths supply

On energy, the document also proposes the "opening of public lands and the outer continental shelf to exploration and responsible production," suggesting that doing so could be key for determining the level of the US' oil supply. The platform suggests that this process should be put in the hand of the states, entrusting them to ensure the balance between environmental protection and domestic economic growth.

A similar approach is suggested for rare earths, which are minerals used in manufacturing high-tech and industrial products, among others. The extraction process is known for being highly polluting, and China currently fulfils the bulk of global demand of these minerals. The platform says that without speeding up the granting of permits for extracting those minerals from public lands, China will continue to be the top player in this field.

"We support the development of all forms of energy that are marketable in a free economy without subsidies, including coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear power, and hydropower," the document also says, adding that the federal government should not "play favourites" between different types of energy providers.

The language in this area criticises the Obama Administration's financial help "to companies that went bankrupt without producing a kilowatt of energy" – an apparent reference to the high-profile collapse of the Solyndra solar panel maker in 2011, after the company received significant support through government guarantees. (See Bridges Weekly, [19 October 2011](#))

The document does note, however, that it supports the "cost-effective development" of renewables, including energy from wind, solar, biomass, biofuels, geothermal, and tidal sources. It also calls for more action to make the US a stronger energy exporter, including of liquefied natural gas (LNG), a subject that has come up in current US trade negotiations with the EU.

ICTSD reporting; "Mike Pence Walks Back Prior Positions to Stand With Trump on Muslims, Wall, TPP," ABC NEWS, 16 July 2016.

GLOBAL ECONOMY

EU Commission Outlines Overall Plan to Revise Anti-Dumping Investigations

European Commission officials outlined on Wednesday the overall approach they intend to propose in revising their anti-dumping legislation, in light of the expiry this December of certain provisions of China's WTO accession protocol.

The plans were explained during a [press conference](#) in Brussels by European Commission Vice-President Jyrki Katainen, responsible for Jobs, Growth, Investment, and Competitiveness, together with European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström.

"Today's discussion was not about whether or not China is a market economy," [said](#) Katainen, referring to talks within the College of Commissioners under a so-called orientation debate. "It is about how to adapt our trade defence instruments to deal with the realities of overcapacity and a changing international legal framework."

A formal legislative proposal is still in the works and is due later this year, though officials did not confirm a date on Wednesday. However, the approach they discussed reflects "convergence" within the Commission on the political elements of a solution.

The upcoming proposal will then need to go through EU legislative procedures, specifically approval by the European Council and Parliament.

Three-pronged approach

During Wednesday's press conference, Katainen and Malmström confirmed that their proposed approach would entail three main components.

The first of these would be changing how the EU conducts its anti-dumping probes so that it no longer differentiates how it treats countries by a "market economy" or "non-market economy" designation.

Under the EU's current anti-dumping regulation, it separates countries into lists depending on whether they meet a set of "market economy" criteria. Should they be classified as a non-market economy, then the EU determines the "normal value" of a good using a "price or constructed value" from another country that is a market economy, in what is referred to as an "analogue" method.

The European Commission will propose amending this calculation method so that it is now "country-neutral," thus doing away with this system of lists. Probes would instead be conducted to address distortions in countries or sectors resulting from state intervention. By doing so, officials claimed that this would ensure that the EU is upholding its international obligations at the WTO.

"We will not grant market economy status to China. But we will fulfil our international commitments," said Katainen.

Meanwhile, under the upcoming proposal, there would also be provisions for a "transition period" that would see existing anti-dumping measures, as well as ongoing investigations, being treated under the old rules.

The EU would also compare Chinese prices with international prices in its investigations, officials said, while working to speed up the timetable for such probes.

Officials also indicated that they would aim to revise their rules on conducting anti-subsidy investigations, also known as countervailing duty investigations, in order to allow for new subsidies uncovered during a probe to be worked into the final duties.

Secondly, the EU's executive arm will continue to press member states in the European Council to approve proposed changes to the bloc's Trade Defence Instruments (TDIs), which were [tabled](#) in April 2013 and have since stalled.

The TDI proposed changes included telling companies two weeks ahead of time of provisional anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures; allowing the EU's executive arm to launch investigations without industry having to first file a petition, for instance in cases where retaliation might occur; or in certain cases not using the "lesser duty" rule that usually limits duties to levels needed to address material injury to producers.

"We have been pushing hard to find a compromise with member states" on the subject, Katainen told reporters on Wednesday. "We can make our procedures both faster and firmer, strengthening our ability to enforce fair trade and bringing us closer to the American model of trade defence."

Lastly, the two officials said that the joint EU-China steel platform announced at a bilateral summit later this month would be key in addressing the high-profile issue of overcapacity in that industrial sector. (See Bridges Weekly, [14 July 2016](#))

"[Overcapacity] is a serious challenge in China and they have recognised the problem there," said Katainen. Addressing it within the Asian economy will likely lead to factory closures, he added, noting that it will not be "an easy task" for China.

China accession protocol

The urgency for revising the EU's anti-dumping rules comes in light of a December 2016 deadline involving the terms under which China became a member of the Geneva-based WTO.

When China joined the global trade body in 2001, it agreed in Section 15 of its accession protocol certain terms regarding the methodology of determining "price comparability" under Article VI of the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994, as well as the Anti-Dumping Agreement.

Specifically, this section allows for two alternatives for importing WTO members, depending on whether Chinese producers can prove the existence of prevailing market economy conditions in their industry, such as in the production and sale of the goods involved.

Should Chinese producers be able to prove this, then importing WTO members would need to use Chinese prices or costs in their investigations, under subparagraph 15(a)(i). However, if those producers cannot demonstrate such market economy conditions, an importing WTO member can deviate from using "strict comparisons" with Chinese prices and costs, according to subparagraph 15(a)(ii).

A subsequent subparagraph in that same section outlines certain conditions for ending the use of subparagraph 15(a). Subparagraph (d) reads as follows: "once China has established, under the national law of the importing WTO member, that it is a market economy, the provisions of subparagraph (a) shall be terminated provided that the importing member's national law contains market economy criteria as on the date of accession."

That subparagraph then adds 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 sub-paragraph (a) shall no longer apply to that industry or sector.”

The 15-year deadline has set off an intense debate over how WTO members that treat China as a non-market economy in their anti-dumping probes will need to proceed following 11 December 2016, in order not to run afoul of WTO rules. The members that have particularly come into focus in this debate include the US and the EU.

One of the questions raised among trade experts, for example, is what the expiry of Section 15(a)(ii) means for the other parts of 15(a) – in other words, whether under 15 (a)(i), Chinese producers would still need to prove the existence of prevailing market economy conditions.

WTO discussions

Geneva sources said that the issue of China's treatment in anti-dumping probes was also raised at WTO headquarters during a 14 July meeting of the organisation's Goods Council.

At the time, China reportedly called upon fellow WTO members to stop using “surrogate or analogue country prices” in their investigations into alleged dumping, specifically in the process of determining dumping margins.

Rather, members would need to make such determinations using Chinese company prices and costs, as outlined under the WTO's Anti-Dumping Agreement, according to a copy of China's statement seen by Bridges. Beijing has raised the issue at the Goods Council on two previous occasions.

In a notable first, the US spoke up on the issue within the setting of the Goods Council, arguing during the meeting that Section 15(a)(ii) of China's WTO accession protocol does not require the automatic granting of “market economy status,” and that rather this assessment must be derived from the actual facts as well as a member's domestic policies, according to sources familiar with the meeting.

Furthermore, the US reportedly said that Section 15(a) will only expire in full should China show that it qualifies as a market economy under an importing member's domestic law.

China's response, sources said, was that the issue is about methodology, arguing that there will no longer be a legal basis for using such alternative “analogue” methodologies from that December onward.

ICTSD reporting.

AGRICULTURE

WTO Agriculture Talks: Chair Urges Shift from Reflection to Action

The chair of the WTO's agriculture negotiations has told delegations that they need to move from reflection to action, in an informal meeting on Monday that was open to all members of the organisation.

Vangelis Vitalis, the New Zealand ambassador chairing the talks, also shared a set of questions which he said could now be used to structure the negotiations on farm trade issues, sources confirmed to Bridges.

These drew on a flurry of recent communications from negotiators responding to his call for their inputs to the talks, and covered long-standing issues such as farm subsidies as well as newer topics like export restrictions. (See also Bridges Weekly, [23 June 2016](#) and Bridges Africa, [6 July 2016](#).)

Vitalis said that the "specific suggestions" members were now sharing supported his assessment that negotiators are indeed moving towards a more active phase in the talks.

Domestic support the "clear priority"

Vitalis said that agricultural domestic support remains "the clear priority for the overwhelming bulk" of the trade body's membership.

He also said that most are convinced that the issue should be a central plank of any negotiated outcome emerging from the next WTO ministerial conference, due to be held at the end of next year.

However, trade sources told Bridges that the positions of key countries remain far apart. The US in particular is adamant that China must agree to make concessions on its own farm subsidy schemes as part of any negotiated outcome – which Beijing says would be unacceptable.

Measuring support: different approaches

An informal paper tabled on 12 July by four agricultural exporting countries sought to shed more light on aspects of the issue.

Australia, Chile, Colombia, and New Zealand, who co-sponsored the paper, examined data on trade-distorting support for nine different agricultural products between 2008 and 2010, as well as non-product specific support that was classified as trade-distorting.

Although the four countries do not present any conclusions from this data, the numbers suggested that, relative to the other countries examined, China's non-product specific support was unusually high in dollar terms – although was less than the support provided by Brazil, Canada, and the US when seen as a percentage of the value of production.

EU and US support for products such as dairy and sugar was high in both absolute terms and relative to the volume of production, while for other products – such as cotton – support was relatively low in absolute terms but not as a share of the production value.

Vitalis again reminded members of the difficult state of their farm subsidy notifications, citing widespread delays in reporting current data to the trade body's secretariat. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 May 2016](#)).

Some negotiators also noted that the chair had asked members whether product-specific limits were needed to prevent trade-distorting farm support from being disproportionately concentrated on a handful of farm goods.

Market access: a trade-off with domestic support?

The chair told the meeting that some delegations had floated the possibility of a trade-off between the level of ambition in market access and domestic support, an option which he said was "intriguing."

However, he noted that while some members were seeking tariff cuts and other market access concessions, others had defensive interests, with some fearing the loss of existing preferential access.

An informal paper from Paraguay, tabled on 15 July, was among those setting out further questions for members to address – although, as with other recent submissions, many members told the meeting that they had not had enough time to review it properly.

The Paraguayan paper looks at issues around tariff peaks and escalation – the latter involving the practice of levying progressively higher duties on more heavily-processed products.

Export competition

Vitalis said that some members were keen to pursue further talks on issues around agricultural export competition – an area of negotiations dealing with export subsidies and other measures with similar effects, such as export credits.

However, a breakthrough agreement establishing new rules in this area at the WTO's Nairobi ministerial conference last December has dampened the appetite of some countries to pursue further talks on this subject. (See Bridges Daily Update, [19 December 2015](#))

The chair said that one member had suggested that negotiators should not be diverted into addressing "an unproductive line of enquiry."

However, many negotiators from the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries were determined to pursue talks in all three agricultural negotiating areas identified in the Nairobi declaration, namely market access, domestic support, and export competition.

Vitalis reminded members that they had received specific instructions from ministers to address all three areas.

Transparency on export restrictions

A set of questions tabled by Singapore on 13 July called for more transparency on agricultural export restrictions – a topic which the chair said he was classifying among "other issues" in his consultations.

Singapore asked whether members had enough clarity on existing rules governing requirements on notifying agricultural export restrictions to the WTO, along with exceptions to these requirements for developing countries.

Vitalis said that reactions to the proposal in his bilateral consultations had been broadly supportive – although he also said that some countries had indicated they would not be prepared to begin talks on further disciplining export restrictions.

Public food stockholding: what approach for "new" programmes?

Vitalis convened a separate meeting on Tuesday, again open to all members, to discuss public food stock purchases in developing countries at government-set prices.

WTO members agreed at their Bali ministerial conference nearly three years ago that they would not bring these programmes to dispute under the trade body's farm subsidy rules while they negotiate a permanent solution to the problems that some developing countries say they face. (See Bridges Daily Update, [7 December 2013](#))

However, trade sources told Bridges that many developing countries wanted any such solution to cover new programmes that might be introduced in the future – a demand which agricultural exporting countries reportedly found unacceptable.

The Bali [agreement](#) only refers to programmes "existing as of the date of this Decision" – thereby covering those in countries such as India that were buying food at administered prices as part of their public stockholding schemes at the time, but not others, including in many poorer countries, that lacked the financial resources to do so.

Special safeguard mechanism

WTO members were also due to convene on Thursday 21 July, at the chair's invitation, to discuss progress towards a new special safeguard mechanism that developing countries would be able to use to protect domestic producers from sudden import surges and price depressions.

A decision at the Nairobi ministerial conference last year confirmed that developing countries would be able to make use of this instrument, but without giving any details of how it would work in practice.

Farm exporting countries have argued that any such instrument should be part of broader talks on agricultural market access, although the G-33 coalition of developing countries with significant populations of smallholder farmers have resisted this assertion.

Vitalis told WTO members that further negotiating sessions would be held in October on the special safeguard mechanism and public stockholding, alongside a meeting of the special session of the Committee on Agriculture, which is tasked with farm trade talks at the organisation.

ICTSD reporting.

DISPUTES

US, EU File WTO Challenges Against Chinese Export Restrictions on Raw Materials

Over the past week, the US and the EU have both filed requests for consultations – the first step in WTO dispute settlement proceedings – with China over alleged export restrictions on select raw materials used in industrial manufacturing.

The US announced its complaint ([DS508](#)) on 13 July, along with an update to the consultations request on 19 July. The EU confirmed it was filing its own case (DS509) on Tuesday as well.

The raw materials initially raised by the US included antimony, cobalt, copper, graphite, lead, magnesia, talc, tantalum, and tin, which are inputs into the aerospace, automotive, electronics, and chemical industries, among others. The [13 July complaint](#) specifically faults alleged Chinese export duties on these materials.

Washington then said on [19 July](#) that it was expanding this list to cover export duties on chromium along with export quotas on antimony, indium, magnesia, talc, and tin. The US also alleged that China has restricted the trading rights of exporting enterprises and appears to have improperly administered those export restrictions.

The EU is targeting the same types of export restrictions on the same list of raw materials, some of which Brussels [cited](#) in a 2013 document as being [among a list](#) of 20 "critical raw materials" whose value for industry and the environment have made them "crucial to Europe's economy and essential to maintaining and improving our quality of life."

For some of these minerals, such as graphite, China is the largest global producer; in other instances, such as copper, the Asian economy is responsible for approximately 10 percent of world supply, according to EU statistics.

The US and EU will now hold consultations with China in an effort to reach a mutually agreed solution in the disputes. In each case, if the parties fail to reach a solution within 60 days, the complainant can ask the WTO to form a panel to examine the case.

Export restrictions

Both the US and EU have raised the terms of China's accession protocol – in other words, the terms under which the Asian economy joined the WTO in 2001 – in their respective consultations requests.

While the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994 (GATT) does not explicitly prevent WTO members from imposing duties on exports, China's accession protocol requires it to "eliminate all taxes and charges applied to exports," unless they are specifically provided for in an annex to the protocol, or are charged in conformity with the GATT provision on "fees and formalities connected with importation and exportation."

In its 13 July consultations request, the US alleges that China is contravening its accession terms because it has not eliminated export duties on these raw materials. The US says that China applies and administers these export duties, which range from five to 20 percent *ad valorem*, through various government instruments including trade and customs laws.

Regarding the issue of quantitative restrictions, the US said on 19 July that these seem to violate both its accession commitments on trading rights, as well as Article XI:1 of the GATT.

That GATT provision says that WTO members cannot impose "prohibitions or restrictions other than duties, taxes, or other charges, whether made effective through quotas, import or export licences, or other measures," on any imports or exports.

The US has also cited GATT Article X:3 along with a separate section of China's accession protocol in its follow-up complaint, arguing that these export policies have been put in place "in a manner that is not uniform, impartial, or reasonable."

Similarly, the EU has cited both China's accession protocol as well as other WTO rules in its own complaint, sources say. While the US consultations requests are publicly available, the EU request was not yet published at press time. The EU has also cited among its concerns the administration and allocation of the alleged Chinese export quotas.

[According to](#) US Trade Representative Michael Froman, the export duties are an attempt by China to "game the system," giving Chinese manufacturers a "substantial competitive advantage" by making the materials more expensive for downstream American manufacturers that rely on them, while keeping prices lower for domestic Chinese manufacturers.

In [response](#) to the US' claim, officials from China's Ministry of Commerce have defended the export restrictions on the grounds that they are a part of "overall measures to strengthen environmental protection and accord with WTO rules," particularly in light of the "daily worsening pressure on resources and the environment."

Earlier cases

Previously, the WTO's Appellate Body found in separate disputes that certain Chinese export restrictions on different raw materials and rare earths were inconsistent with its international trade obligations, and that China could not invoke the "general exceptions" listed under Article XX of the GATT 1994 to justify export duties contravening its accession protocol.

That GATT article outlines a set of justifications under which WTO members may put in place measures that would otherwise violate global trade rules in order to address greater public policy goals, such as conserving exhaustible natural resources. Such measures must not be "disguised" trade restrictions nor serve as "arbitrary and unjustifiable discrimination" between WTO members.

Both the US and EU were among the complainants in those earlier WTO cases. (See Bridges Weekly, [10 September 2014](#) and [1 February 2012](#))

"The past two WTO rulings on Chinese export restrictions have been crystal clear – these measures are against international trade rules," [said](#) EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström. "As we do not see China advancing to remove them at all, we must take legal action."

ICTSD reporting; "U.S. challenges China raw material export duties in trade enforcement push," REUTERS, 14 July 2016.

UNITED KINGDOM

Following Leadership Change, UK Officials Test Waters on Future Trade Deals

The new government of UK Prime Minister Theresa May has begun exploring possible options for trade deals with third countries, officials say, though the process to formally launch exit negotiations with the EU has not yet been set in motion.

The UK premier took office last Wednesday, and shortly thereafter confirmed her [cabinet appointments](#), including Liam Fox as the new Secretary of State for International Trade, as well as David Davis as the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union.

"As we leave the European Union, we will forge a bold new positive role for ourselves in the world, and we will make Britain a country that works not for a privileged few, but for every one of us," she [said](#) last week upon taking office.

May has said that she intends to follow through with the exit negotiations with the EU, stating that "Brexit is Brexit" and that the will of her country's people must be respected. However, she has suggested that she will not trigger Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon – the formal mechanism for launching such talks – this year, partly due to ongoing discussions with Scotland given the latter's stated interest in remaining an EU member.

Davis, who is tasked with shepherding the exit talks, has similarly confirmed that Article 50 will likely not be invoked until late this year nor early next, and that the UK would aim to reach a deal with the EU by the end of 2018.

Meanwhile, the 23 June referendum result on "Brexit" is already facing a legal challenge in front of the UK's High Court, with hearings scheduled for this coming October.

Australia, US discussions

Should Article 50 be invoked and the exit negotiations undertaken, how the UK will handle its future external trade relationships once it is no longer an EU member will be a key question going forward, including on the timing and procedures for conducting such talks.

Meanwhile, initial suggestions of future trade deals between the UK and third countries are already being floated, with officials already holding early discussions to explore the subject.

Over the past week, May has reportedly discussed the prospect of a future UK-Australia trade deal with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who was recently re-elected. The EU and Australia had already confirmed late last year their own plans to engage in trade talks, which they aim to launch in 2017. (See Bridges Weekly, [19 November 2015](#))

"We did discuss a free trade agreement," said the Australian premier [to reporters](#) on 17 July, recounting his conversation with May. "Clearly our free trade arrangements with the United Kingdom of course are with the European community. So as Britain leaves the EU, what we will need to do [is] we negotiate direct arrangements with Britain."

"We need to get moving on that quickly. Britain will not be out of the EU for several years... but we need to get working on the new trade arrangements between Britain and Australia, as indeed Britain will have to undertake that work with many other countries as well including the rest of the European community," he added.

The Australian premier did not elaborate on how this process would go forward, in light of the expected launch of EU-Australia talks next year – at which point the UK is still expected to be a full EU member.

On a similar note, UK officials are reportedly having initial discussions with their US counterparts on the possibility of a bilateral deal further down the road. The EU is currently negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US, and European Commissioner Cecilia Malmström [has confirmed](#) that the UK will be participating in those talks for as long as it is a full EU member. (For more on the TTIP talks, see related story, this edition)

US President Barack Obama had cautioned earlier this year that the UK would be at the “back of the queue” for trade deals should it leave the EU, given Washington’s priority in negotiating agreements with country groups rather than individual nations. (See Bridges Weekly, [28 April 2016](#))

Talks between the UK and US since the 23 June referendum have, however, indicated that the two sides are now interested in at least exploring the subject further.

“Everybody understands that as a starting point here, folks, the UK has to work to define its new trade relationship with the EU,” said US Secretary of State John Kerry [in remarks to reporters](#) on 19 July following a meeting with UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson.

“That’s obvious and automatic. And the British have told us that they can’t sign any kind of new trade agreement, and I think it stands to common sense that you can’t do that, until they’re no longer a member of the EU,” he added.

The US official later clarified that this statement does not mean the two sides cannot begin holding conversations or negotiations.

“What I said is it’s impossible to sign an agreement until the EU issue is resolved, and that obviously takes a period of time. But President Obama made it very clear the other day, as did our trade representative, Michael Froman, that we are absolutely prepared to engage in conversations because it would be irresponsible not to,” said Kerry.

Johnson told reporters that entering into new trade deals would be “legally impossible” for the UK as long as it is an EU member, though it can begin to “pencil things in.”

The UK has also reportedly expressed an interest in a possible trade deal with Canada. However, Canadian International Trade Minister Chrystia Freeland has said that Ottawa’s current priority is completing the ratification process for the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which is already expected to be a difficult process. (See Bridges Weekly, [7 July 2016](#))

IMF downgrades global growth prospects following “Brexit” vote

Meanwhile, new figures from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released Tuesday predict that the global economy will grow at 3.1 percent this year and 3.4 percent in 2017. In [an update](#) to its semi-annual World Economic Outlook (WEO), the Washington-based institution framed this downward revision in the context of the global uncertainty following the Brexit vote. (See Bridges Weekly, [30 June 2016](#))

The Fund had previously predicted in its April WEO that growth this year would reach 3.2 percent in 2016 and 3.5 percent in 2017. (See Bridges Weekly, [14 April 2016](#))

"Before the June 23 vote in the United Kingdom in favour of leaving the European Union, economic data and financial market developments suggested that the global economy was evolving broadly as forecast in the April 2016 World Economic Outlook," said the IMF.

The vote in favour of the European Union, the document says, means that a key downside risk for the global economy has now come into being – meaning that "the global outlook for 2016-17 has worsened, despite the better-than-expected performance in early 2016."

"Brexit has thrown a spanner in the works," said Maurice Obtsfeld, the organisation's chief economist and economic counsellor, in comments to reporters explaining the downward revision.

The IMF puts forward two possible sets of predictions for the global economy, both with some negative aspects. However, the Fund suggests that these outcomes are becoming increasingly "less likely" given that financial markets are beginning to adjust to the post-Brexit vote context.

While both of these alternatives predict some negative impacts for areas such as investment and consumption, the harsher option – which would see the UK and EU's exit talks falter, leaving their trade terms to be governed solely by WTO rules – has been flagged as "less probable."

ICTSD reporting; "October court date for Brexit challenge," BBC, 19 July 2016; "Britain's new PM May gives Johnson big job, says needs time before Brexit talks," REUTERS, 14 July 2016; "UK's May Keen on Australian Trade Deal Soonest After Brexit," BLOOMBERG, 17 July 2016; "Canada Focusing on EU Trade Pact Before UK Deal, Minister Says," BLOOMBERG, 17 July 2016; "UK will not invoke EU Article 50 this year, government lawyer says," REUTERS, 19 July 2016; "Theresa May: Article 50 will not be brought forward," ITV, 15 July 2016; "David Davis: Trigger Brexit by start of 2017," BBC NEWS, 15 July 2016.

TRADE AGREEMENTS

EU, Indonesia Set to Begin Trade Talks

The EU and Indonesia have now launched negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), officials confirmed this week, with the first round of talks due before year's end.

In a joint statement issued on 18 July, EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and Indonesian Minister of Trade Thomas Lembong [highlighted](#) the mutually beneficial nature such an accord could have for both economies, which together would cover a population of 750 million people.

"Our trade relationship has enormous untapped potential. The EU – the world's largest trading block – and Indonesia – the largest player in the dynamic region of South-East Asia – have lots to gain from a deeper trade and investment relation," they said.

The planned bilateral pact would cover both trade and investment, and include services, government procurement, competition policy, economic and social development, and intellectual property rights, among other subjects.

EU-ASEAN trade ties

One of the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indonesia is the region's largest and most populated economy, and the sixth to begin bilateral free trade negotiations with the EU.

The EU has already reached deals with Singapore and Vietnam, though these are not yet in force. The EU-Vietnam deal is currently undergoing a "legal scrub," while the EU-Singapore deal is awaiting an opinion from the European Court of Justice on whether the deal should be approved as a mixed agreement, with shared competences between the EU and individual member states, or if should be treated as one whose subjects fall entirely under EU competence.

While the EU and ASEAN had initially vied for a region-to-region agreement between them, those efforts have slowed in recent years. However, Brussels maintains that these individual negotiations [can](#) lay the groundwork for a future EU-ASEAN accord, "which remains the EU's ultimate objective."

Indonesian officials, for their part, have flagged the potential of having increased access to the European market as a draw for them. Indonesia's exports to the 28-nation bloc are dominated primarily by agricultural goods, along with machinery, textiles, and plastics.

The Southeast Asian economy already benefits from having nearly one-third of its goods entering the EU being imported under the bloc's [Generalised Scheme of Preferences](#) (GSP). That system involves providing tariff preferences on certain goods, which are accorded to developing countries depending on their meeting certain criteria.

"CEPA puts a roadmap for us to raise our environmental, hygienic, and safety standards for our products and hopefully after doing so, we would earn a little premium from the EU for managing to meet that quota. We aspire to uphold our standards and quality to the EU's level," [said](#) Lembong, underlining Indonesia's commitment to a more open and competitive economy.

The EU is Indonesia's fourth largest trading partner, with total bilateral trade in services between them amounting to €6 billion in 2014. Bilateral goods trade the following year totalled €25.3 billion.

"The EU is the world's biggest economic bloc. We are very happy to be able to start the negotiation rounds. This shows the spirit of partnership between Indonesia and the EU is very strong," said Lembong, according to comments [reported](#) by the Jakarta Post.

ICTSD reporting; "EU and Indonesia Launch Bilateral Trade Talks," EIN NEWS, 19 July 2016; "EU, Indonesia Launch Free Trade Talks," AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, 19 July 2016; "RI, EU Launch Trade Deal Negotiations," JAKARTA POST, 19 July 2016; "EU and Indonesia Launch Bilateral Trade Talks," EUROPA, 18 July 2016; "Indonesia-EU CEPA set for 2019," JAKARTA POST, 26 April 2016; "Indonesia to speed up EU CEPA negotiation," JAKARTA POST, 26 January 2016.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming Soon

22 July, Tokyo, Japan. REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON GROWTH AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION. This event is part of the Asian Development Bank Institute's Seminar Series, and will feature presentations on how trade integration has affected growth and inequality levels in select Southeast Asian economies, while also reviewing China's role in this area. Registration details for this public event can be found on the Asian Development Bank Institute's [website](#).

26-27 July, Tokyo, Japan. SOURCES OF INCOME INEQUALITY IN ASIA. This event, hosted by the Asian Development Bank Institute, aims to examine factors that contribute to income inequality in Asia, looking at a range of different economies in the region. Topics for discussion will include, among others, housing prices, financial inclusion, and urbanisation. More information is available [here](#).

26-27 July, Hanoi, Vietnam. APEC WORKSHOP ON PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BIOMASS ENERGY. This workshop is intended to provide Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members with a platform to discuss current policies and technologies relating to biomass energy facilitation and development. The meeting is part of a longer-running project which aims to facilitate the cooperation of APEC member economies in both developing and deploying biomass energy. Further information, including supporting documents, can be found on the APEC [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 July: Dispute Settlement Body

22 July: Trade Policy Review Body – China

26 + 28 July: Trade Policy Review Body - Singapore

27-28 July: General Council

Other Upcoming Events

29 July, New Delhi, India. REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA: STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON FOOD, WATER, AND ENERGY SECURITY. Organised by the Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS International), this event aims to give participants a forum to evaluate the opportunities and challenges for cooperating both between and within regions for more sustainable agricultural practices, agricultural value chains, and water resource management. Additionally, the meeting will also examine possible energy-related opportunities in trade and investment for the region. A copy of the agenda and more details about the event can be found [here](#).

1 August, Beijing, China. ICTSD WORKSHOP ON G-20 TRADE AND INVESTMENT OUTCOMES. This event is being organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), with discussions addressing the outcomes from the G-20 Trade and Investment Working Group and Trade Ministers' Meeting. The objective is to then provide feedback that can be transmitted to G-20 leaders for when they meet in Hangzhou, China, in September. The meeting also aims to support continued efforts at G-20 cooperation on both trade and investment in the longer-term future. Additional details are available [here](#).

1-10 September, Honolulu, US. 2016 IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS. This quadrennial event is being hosted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with this edition's theme being "Planet at the crossroads." The event aims to examine the opportunities from partnerships across a range of sectors, in order to ensure the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More information about the event, including an official programme and speakers' list, is available [here](#).

5-9 September, Jeju Island, South Korea. GLOBAL GREEN GROWTH WEEK 2016. This event is being hosted by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), bringing together leaders from the public and private sector from over 30 countries for discussions on green growth trends, finance, technology, and more. The gathering will feature over 60 discussion sessions. To learn more, visit the event [website](#).

27-29 September, Geneva, Switzerland. WTO PUBLIC FORUM 2016: INCLUSIVE TRADE. This year's edition of the WTO's annual outreach event will focus on better integrating a broader range of actors into the global trading system, particularly for women and small and medium-sized enterprises. Registration is now open, with additional details to be provided as the event draws nearer. More information can be found [here](#).

28-30 September, Geneva, Switzerland. TRADE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2016. This annual gathering is organised by the International Trade Centre (ITC), with this year's edition having as its theme "Sustainable Value Chains: Open Data Makes a Difference." The discussions will aim to support the ongoing efforts for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More details, including a provisional programme, can be found [here](#).

29 September, Brussels, Belgium. EUROPE LEADING ON SOLAR ENERGY: CELEBRATING 100 GW OF SOLARPOWER. SolarPower Europe is holding this event to mark Europe's recent solar milestone: the installation of 100 gigawatts of grid-connected photovoltaic power. The event aims to show the advances made in the solar sector across the 28-nation bloc in recent years. To learn more, visit SolarPower Europe's [website](#).

Resources

GLOBAL TRADE PLATEAUS. By Simon Evenett and Johannes Fritz for the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) (July 2016). This updated version of the "Global Trade Alert" report examines whether there is indeed a "slowdown" in the levels of global trade. The authors suggest that trade volumes have hit a "plateau" and examine various specific product categories where trade levels have fallen. The authors also examine trade-restricting measures put in place by various economies, along with issues relating specifically to the steel crisis. The report can be accessed [here](#).

IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TPP) FOR THE WORLD TRADING SYSTEM. By Jeffrey J. Schott, Cathleen Cimino-Isaacs, and Euijin Jung for the Peterson Institute for International Economics (July 2016). This policy brief assesses how the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) may affect other regional initiatives on trade, along with its potential to set precedents for work at the WTO. The authors aim to address some of the issues raised by countries not in the TPP, along with the political climate on the trade deal in its current signatories. The full brief can be viewed [here](#).

UNCTAD ANNUAL REPORT 2015: DELIVERING ON A SUSTAINABLE AGENDA. Published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (July 2016). This report details UNCTAD's efforts in supporting sustainable development outcomes, particularly in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The publication also highlights the UN agency's role in providing evidence-based policy recommendations and technical support, along with providing a space for sharing views among different actors. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

GENDER EQUALITY AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION. By Romina Kazandjian, Lisa Kolovich, Kalpana Kochhar and Monique Newlak for the International Monetary Fund (July 2016). This working paper provides evidence on how gender-friendly policies stand to help countries diversify their economies, particularly when it comes to trade in low-income and developing countries. The authors review gender gaps in opportunity and in the labour market, examining then how these may affect labour-related efficiency. The working paper can be downloaded [here](#).

A SURVEY OF INVESTMENT PROVISIONS IN REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS. By Vasyl Chornyi, Marianna Nerushay, and Jo-Ann Crawford for the World Trade Organization (July 2016). The authors of this working paper undertake a survey the investment provisions contained in 260 regional trade agreements that are currently in force. The publication reviews a series of categories for these types of investment provisions, with a view to comparing such disciplines. The working paper can be downloaded [here](#).

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