



## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council - TRADE ISSUES**

### **7 May in Brussels**

*The Council will discuss ongoing negotiations on TTIP, the envisaged transatlantic trade and investment partnership with the **United States**. It is intended to focus on investor-state dispute settlement provisions.*

*The Council will also review preparations for the WTO's 10th ministerial conference, to be held in Nairobi in December 2015. It will discuss the WTO's **Doha Development Agenda** and ongoing negotiations on an **environmental goods** agreement.*

*Over lunch, ministers will discuss trade aspects of the EU's Eastern Partnership.*

*After the Council, ministers will meet their counterparts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine for the first-ever **Eastern Partnership** ministerial meeting on trade. They will discuss economic aspects, and the opportunities and challenges for developing a successful trade dimension to the partnership.*

*The Council meeting will start at 10.00. The Eastern Partnership ministerial meeting is scheduled for 15.00. **Press conferences** will be held after the Council and following the Eastern Partnership meeting.*

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*Press conferences and public events by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>*

*Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on: [www.eucouncil.tv](http://www.eucouncil.tv)*

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## EU-US trade and investment negotiations

The Council will take stock of ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive trade and investment agreement with the United States, the "transatlantic trade and investment partnership" or TTIP.

It will discuss reformed investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions in the TTIP, on the basis of a note from the Commission.

At an informal meeting of trade ministers in Riga on 25 March, the Commission presented its ideas for a reformed ISDS mechanism in TTIP, drawing on the outcome of a public consultation. It is due to present a formal proposal. Ministers welcomed the Commission's ideas on ISDS under TTIP and, more generally, confirmed their support for a comprehensive and balanced agreement.

Nine negotiating rounds have now been held, the latest in New York from 20 to 24 April 2015. It is expected that the TTIP will be made up of three components: market access, regulatory issues and non-tariff barriers; and rules.

Ten consolidated negotiating texts have been tabled, combining both sides' proposals into a single document. The Commission is endeavouring to make maximum progress before the 2015 summer pause.

Meanwhile the European Parliament is due to vote a resolution on TTIP in June. In Washington, the political calendar is also influenced by negotiations on a transpacific partnership and by a draft bill on the President's fast-track negotiating authority. The Commission is leading the negotiations on behalf of the EU and its member states, on the basis of a mandate agreed by the Council in June 2013. The Council decided in October 2014 to make public its negotiating directives.

Throughout the negotiation, the Commission is required to keep the Council's Trade Policy Committee and the European Parliament regularly informed. The agreement will be concluded by the Council and the member states, with the consent of the European Parliament.

In March 2015, the European Council called for every effort to be made "to conclude negotiations on an ambitious, comprehensive and mutually beneficial agreement by the end of the year". It said that "member states and the Commission should step up efforts to communicate the benefits of the agreement and to enhance dialogue with civil society".

When negotiations are completed, the TTIP will be the biggest bilateral trade agreement ever negotiated. According to the Commission, it could add around 0.5% to the EU's annual economic output.

The EU and the US account together for about half of global GDP and nearly one third of world trade flows. Both are each other's largest trading partner in terms of total trade, and one or the other is the largest trade and investment partner for almost all other countries in the global economy. The EU had 16.9 % of the US's total trade in 2013 (ranking second for both imports and exports), while the US represented 15.2 % of the EU's total trade in 2014 (ranking second for imports, first for exports).

- [EU negotiating mandate for TTIP](#)
- [Commission webpage on trade with the US](#)
- [Commission press release on the analysis of it's ISDS/TTIP consultation](#)

## **Doha Development Agenda - Environmental goods**

The Council will take stock of talks under the WTO's Doha Development Agenda (DDA), in particular ongoing plurilateral negotiations on an environmental goods agreement.

The next WTO ministerial conference will be held in Nairobi on 15-18 December 2015, with the aim of concluding the DDA. A deadline has been set for July 2015 for agreeing on a work programme following the last ministerial conference, held in Bali in December 2013.

Following a commitment made in 2012 by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum to reduce tariffs on 54 environmental goods, the EU and 13 other members of the WTO in July 2014 launched negotiations to liberalise global trade in environmental goods. The aim is to create a 'living agreement' that can respond to new technologies and to which new products can be added in the future. The first round of negotiations took place in Geneva in July 2014.

Over the course of five negotiating rounds, a list of product nominations covering 10 categories of environmental goods has been developed.

On 1 April 2015, the EU tabled its complete list of product nominations. All product nominations were compiled in April. The aim of the sixth round of negotiations, scheduled for 4-8 May 2015, is to finalise the list of environmental goods to be included in the agreement.

Currently only some WTO members have chosen to take part in the talks. But once a critical mass has been reached to get an agreement, the benefits of this plurilateral initiative will be applied to all WTO members, using the most favoured nation principle. Ideally, the agreement will be made part of the package of WTO accords so other WTO members can open up their own markets.

In May 2014, the Council adopted conclusions and negotiating directives on a multilateral "green goods initiative" in order to guide the Commission in negotiating on behalf of the EU.

[2014 conclusions on the green goods initiative](#)

## **Eastern Partnership**

Over lunch, ministers will discuss trade aspects of the EU's Eastern Partnership with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

They will prepare an Eastern Partnership trade ministerial meeting taking place in the afternoon, as well as an Eastern Partnership summit to be held in Riga on 21-22 May.

The Commission is expected to update ministers on the state of trilateral negotiations, also including Russia, on implementation of the EU-Ukraine "deep and comprehensive" free trade area. Contacts resumed on 20-21 April 2013 at a technical level.

## Other issues

Under "other business", Greece will raise the issue of the non-inclusion of feta cheese amongst protected geographical indications in the draft economic and trade agreement with **Canada**.

Without discussion, the Council is expected to agree that the EU should join an initiative to promote fundamental labour rights and practises in **Myanmar/Burma**. A decision to this effect was taken by the Commission on 26 March 2015. The initiative was launched by Myanmar/Burma, the United States, Japan, Denmark and the International Labour Organisation in November 2014.

[Commission decision of 26 March 2015](#)

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