

Press release
07.12.2013



FTA
Foreign Trade Association

EUROPEAN TRADE HIGHLY WELCOMES WTO DEAL ON TRADE FACILITATION: BUSINESS WORLDWIDE IS THE WINNER

Brussels, 7 December 2013 - The 9th Ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Bali ended today with a major – and to some extent unexpected – success. The 159 WTO member states agreed on a package including a Trade Facilitation Agreement which will simplify and harmonise trading procedures and modernisation of customs handling in developing countries. “The European distribution and import sector has been campaigning for such a deal for more than a decade and, finally, our efforts have paid off. We expect a major improvement for companies doing international trading business which will allow our members to save millions of euros every year”, Jan Eggert, Director General of the Foreign Trade Association (FTA), commented the outcome.

In concrete terms, European retailers, wholesalers, brand companies and importers will see a reduction of bureaucracy at borders and important gains in time when importing from and exporting to developing countries. Crucial components of the Trade Facilitation Agreement are the adoption of a single administrative document as well as automated and online schemes which will help customs officials to simplify procedures.

Jan Eggert stressed that “trade facilitation is an active tool to fight corruption at the border and to increase transparency and efficiency, shaping a typical win-win situation. Main addressees of the package will be developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America which suffer from inefficient and lengthy customs procedures.” WTO members should now aim at promptly implementing the agreement and the industrialised world should live up to its commitment to provide sufficient technical assistance to beneficiaries, he added.

FTA also hails other deliverables of the Bali summit, notably the two agreements on agriculture and development as well as the accession of Yemen to the WTO as the 160th member. “International trade plays an important role in fostering growth and alleviating poverty in developing countries. This Bali package is a significant step forward in reviving

talks within the Doha Development Round which was initiated in 2001. We will now invest considerable energy in creating a positive environment for negotiations to continue in Geneva and we call all WTO members to keep momentum high on the remaining Doha issues”, Director General Eggert insisted.

FTA has been very vocal about the importance of reaching a comprehensive deal in Bali. This message was inter alia conveyed in a Joint Statement, co-signed by the FTA and ten other business organisations, and the publication of a Position Paper containing a wish-list for this Ministerial and creative propositions for the so called post-Bali agenda.

* * *

For further information, please contact:

Pierre Groening
FTA Trade Policy Advisor
pierre.groening@fta-intl.org
tel: + 32 2 762 05 51

FTA is Europe's premier association for trade policy and global supply chains. FTA represents retailers, importers and brand manufacturers in the political arena and in public to promote and defend free trade and supports their international business by providing information and practical solutions. The Association supports its Members to improve sustainability in the international supply chain.

IMPRESSUM / CONTACT

FTA - Foreign Trade Association
172, Av. De Cortenbergh
B-1000
Bruxelles

Tel: 0032-2-762 05 51
Fax: 0032-2-762 75 06
Email: info@fta-intl.org
Internet: www.fta-intl.org