

Press release  
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FTA  
Foreign Trade Association

## JOINT STATEMENT BY BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS ON WTO TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT

**Foreign Trade Association: “WTO and the global trading system face a make or break situation”**

**Brussels, 15 October 2014. In a joint statement initiated and published by the Foreign Trade Association (FTA), 14 business organisations from four continents and representing more than 60 countries urge WTO Member States to immediately unblock and ratify the long-awaited Agreement on Trade Facilitation. The business sector considers this agreement decisive for both simplifying customs procedures worldwide and overcoming the current impasse of the multilateral trade system. Failure of the Trade Facilitation Agreement would have dramatic consequences for the WTO and international commerce.**

The FTA, representing over 1.400 European retailers, importers and brand companies, highly welcomed the breakthrough on Trade Facilitation achieved in Bali in December 2013 and acknowledged the crucial role played by the WTO to finally deliver tangible results after years of stalled discussions. However, the blocking of the implementation of the deal by India is once again threatening the credibility of the World Trade Organisation and the equilibrium of the entire multilateral trading system.

“Businesses worldwide are deeply worried about India’s policy, which should live up to the commitment made in Bali instead of adding more obstacles to the process”, stressed FTA Director General, Jan Eggert. “The WTO General Council on 21 October 2014 will show the way: success or fiasco of the most prominent WTO undertaking since its creation in 1995”.

The co-signatories of this joint statement express serious concern about the current state of play and make an urgent appeal to WTO leaders to break the deadlock and implement an agreement that would significantly cut red tape and streamline global customs procedures. In a world of global supply chains, a multilateral trade rule book facilitating commerce and

supporting the development needs of many countries around the world is crucial.

The 14 business associations backing this declaration, representing various economic sectors from more than 60 countries or one third of all WTO members, raise their voice to again underline the resolute support of business to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the multilateral trading system: “This joint statement is a final call to save the agreement from a perpetual impasse. If a solution is not reached in the upcoming meetings, the consequences would be too dramatic for the global trading system and the existence of the WTO”, underscored Mr. Eggert.

To read the full statement, click here: <http://bit.ly/1oarcvr>

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*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.*

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