



15 October 2014

## Business urges WTO Member States to ratify the Agreement on Trade Facilitation

### Joint Statement by business organisations worldwide

The undersigned associations wait impatiently for Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to put in place all necessary measures for the ratification of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation. We attach the highest importance to this Agreement, which will reduce bureaucratic obstacles at the border and significantly lower costs for economic operators worldwide. Successful ratification of the ambitious Trade Facilitation Agreement would demonstrate the WTO's ability to negotiate and ratify a meaningful trade agreement after years of inaction.

We note with deep concern the recent failure by WTO Members to sign the *protocol* to the Trade Facilitation Agreement, which was part of a trade package negotiated at the December 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference. For tactical reasons, a small coalition, led by India, rejected approval of the protocol to force modifications to other parts of the Bali package. Without this protocol, the Agreement cannot become part of the WTO legal framework, a pre-condition for ratification of the document by Member States' legislatures.

In a world of increasingly complex global value chains, it is more important than ever that the international trade rule book keeps pace with a rapidly transforming business environment. The Agreement on Trade Facilitation is critically important to this process:

- *Ease trade*: Once implemented, this set of rules would establish concrete measures to reduce the cost and time of moving goods across national borders, which benefits all economic operators involved in trade.
- *Support development*: Trade is an engine for economic growth and social well-being. Developing countries stand to realise enormous gains from simplified customs procedures by improving their access to global markets.
- *Revive Doha*: Beyond its intrinsic benefits, the Bali Ministerial trade package is an energetic step forward in overcoming the long-standing impasse in the broader

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Doha Development Round. The multilateral trade agenda is dependent on a successful outcome of the Bali endeavour.

Therefore, our coalition calls upon WTO Member States to proceed with ratification and allow prompt implementation of the long-awaited Agreement on Trade Facilitation. We address a special plea to India and all countries that refused to sign the protocol to abandon their current position and confirm their commitment taken in Bali. Collapse of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation would undoubtedly have grave consequences for the credibility of the World Trade Organization and the multilateral trading system – the future of the WTO is at stake.

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**SIGNATORIES:**

**AVE – Foreign Trade Association of German Retail Trade – Germany**  
**CEC – European Confederation of the Footwear Industry – Europe**  
**EABC – East African Business Council – East Africa**  
**EICC – Europe India Chamber of Commerce – Europe**  
**EURATEX – Europe**  
**Eurochambres – Europe**  
**EuroCommerce – Europe**  
**FESI – Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry - Europe**  
**FTA – Foreign Trade Association – Europe**  
**JBCE – Japan Business Council in Europe – Japan**  
**KITA – Korean International Trade Association – Korea**  
**NRF – National Retail Federation – Unites States of America**  
**RCC – Retail Council of Canada – Canada**  
**SME Global – International**



**Außenhandelsvereinigung des Deutschen Einzelhandels e.V. (AVE – Foreign Trade Association of German Retail Trade)** is the leading organisation for importing retailers in Germany. Since AVE was founded in 1952, it has been representing the interests of German retailers (member’s total annual revenue of around €230 billion) in all matters relating to foreign trade.

[stefan.wengler@ave-intl.de](mailto:stefan.wengler@ave-intl.de) | [www.ave-international.de](http://www.ave-international.de)



The **European Confederation of the Footwear Industry (CEC)** gathers the footwear national associations and federations of the European Union. CEC is the Voice of the European footwear industry vis-à-vis the European Institutions and other international organizations and authorities in Brussels. Current Members represent approximately the 87% of the European manufacturing. Their affiliates are 99% SMEs and directly employ more than 220.000 persons.

[c.arias@cec-footwearindustry.eu](mailto:c.arias@cec-footwearindustry.eu) | [www.cec-footwearindustry.eu](http://www.cec-footwearindustry.eu)



The **East African Business Council (EABC)** is the apex body of business associations of the Private Sector and Corporates from the 5 East African Countries. It was established in 1997 to foster the interests of the Private Sector in the integration process of the East African Community. Originally comprising members from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, its membership was expanded after 2007 to include private sector from Burundi and Rwanda. Currently, EABC has 54 Associations and 102 corporate Members. Amongst the associations are all the national Private Sector Apex Bodies; four manufacturers’ Associations; 5 Chambers of Commerce, 3 Employer Associations; 2 Women Associations, 2 Bankers Associations and the Confederation of Informal Sector Associations of East Africa. Given that the Secretariat is based in Arusha, EABC’s structure includes National Focal Points (NFPs) – who are all currently the national private sector apex bodies.

[aluzze@eabc-online.com](mailto:aluzze@eabc-online.com) | [www.eabc.info](http://www.eabc.info)



The **Europe India Chamber of Commerce (EICC)** speaks for multilateral rule based trading system and improvement in European and Indian competitiveness and is realizing its mission through high level strategic dialogue and debate in which trade and economic issues are intensively discussed. Also, as part of its lobby activities in Brussels where the Chamber is headquartered, it helps Indian companies and industries who are subject to strong and stringent EU regulations in making their voice heard. The Chamber is also helping them in policy level liaising and interventions at the highest levels of government and business.”

[sunil.prasad@coditel.net](mailto:sunil.prasad@coditel.net) | [www.eicc.be](http://www.eicc.be)



**EURATEX** is the European Apparel and Textile Confederation representing the interests of the European textile and clothing industries at the level of the EU institutions. As the voice of the European industry, EURATEX aims to create a favourable environment within the European Union for the manufacture of textile and clothing products. EURATEX's member federations directly or indirectly represent in the EU some 186.000 companies of an industry with a turnover of €166.500 million, employing 1.66 million workers.

[Isabelle.Weiler@euratex.eu](mailto:Isabelle.Weiler@euratex.eu) | <http://euratex.eu>



**Eurochambres**, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, represents over 20 million enterprises in Europe – 98% of which are SMEs – through members in 43 countries and a network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.

[boucsein@eurochambres.eu](mailto:boucsein@eurochambres.eu) | [www.eurochambres.eu](http://www.eurochambres.eu)



**EuroCommerce** represents the retail, wholesale and international trade sectors in Europe. Its membership includes commerce federations and companies in 31 European countries. Commerce plays a unique role in the European economy, acting as the link between manufacturers and the nearly 500 million consumers across Europe over a billion times a day. It is a dynamic and labour-intensive sector, generating 11% of the

EU's GDP. One company out of three in Europe is active in the commerce sector. Over 95% of the 6 million companies in commerce are small and medium-sized enterprises. It also includes some of Europe's most successful companies. The sector is a major source of employment creation: 33 million Europeans work in commerce, which is one of the few remaining job-creating activities in Europe. It also supports millions of dependent jobs throughout the supply chain from small local suppliers to international businesses.

[kamphoener@eurocommerce.be](mailto:kamphoener@eurocommerce.be) | [www.eurocommerce.be](http://www.eurocommerce.be)



Founded in 1960, the **Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI)** represents the interests of approximately 1,800 sporting goods manufacturers through its National Sporting Goods Industry Associations and its directly affiliated member companies. FESI's members directly and indirectly employ about 650,000 workers in the EU with an annual European turnover of over €66 billion. 70-75% of FESI's membership is made up of Small and Medium Enterprises. [vogt@fesi-sport.org](mailto:vogt@fesi-sport.org) | [www.fesi-sport.org](http://www.fesi-sport.org)



The **Foreign Trade Association (FTA)** is Europe's premier association for trade policy and global supply chains. It brings together over 1,300 retailers, importers, brand companies, and national associations, with a combined turnover of more than 700 billion Euros. FTA promotes free trade and fight all kinds of protectionism at national, European and international level.

[pierre.groening@fta-intl.org](mailto:pierre.groening@fta-intl.org) | [www.fta-intl.org](http://www.fta-intl.org)



Created in 1999, the **Japan Business Council in Europe (JBCE)** is a leading European organisation representing the interests of almost 70 multinational companies of Japanese parentage active in Europe. Our members operate across a wide range of sectors, including information and communication technology, electronics, chemicals, automotive, machinery, wholesale trade, precision instruments, pharmaceutical, railway, textiles and glass products. Together, our member companies represented in 2013 global sales of 1.4 trillion euros. Building a new era of cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Japan is the core of our activities.

[kawaguchi@jbce.org](mailto:kawaguchi@jbce.org) | [www.jbce.org](http://www.jbce.org)



Having its headquarters in Seoul, Korea, **KITA** is a non-profit economic organisation representing interests of its 70,000 member companies. KITA has 12 regional centres within Korea and 9 overseas centres including Brussels Centre located in Brussels, Belgium. KITA Brussels Centre carries out variety of trade promotional activities such as business meetings, trade conferences & exhibitions, matchmaking services, information sharing and many more.

[gday@kita.net](mailto:gday@kita.net) | [www.kita.org](http://www.kita.org)



As the world's largest retail trade association and the voice of retail worldwide, **NRF** represents retailers of all types and sizes, including chain restaurants and industry partners, from the United States and more than 45 countries abroad. Retailers operate more than 3.6 million U.S. establishments that support one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.5 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy. NRF's [This is Retail](#) campaign highlights the industry's opportunities for life-long careers, how retailers strengthen communities, and the critical role that retail plays in driving innovation.

[goldj@nrf.com](mailto:goldj@nrf.com) | [www.nrf.com](http://www.nrf.com)



**Retail Council of Canada**

**Retail Council of Canada (RCC)** is the Voice of Retail in Canada representing more than 45,000 store fronts of all retail formats, including department, specialty, discount, and independent stores, and online merchants in general merchandise, grocery and drugs. Its membership represents 80% of all retail sales in Canada. RCC is a strong advocate for retailing in Canada and works with all levels of government and other stakeholders to support employment growth and career opportunities in retail, to promote and sustain retail investments in communities from coast-to-coast, and to enhance consumer choice and industry competitiveness. RCC also provides its members with a full range of services and programs including education and training, benchmarking and best practices, networking, advocacy, and industry information.

[djbrisebois@retailcouncil.org](mailto:djbrisebois@retailcouncil.org) | [www.retailcouncil.org](http://www.retailcouncil.org)



**SME Global** is a think tank and a network of politicians, who are members of the International Democrat Union. It provides an institutional framework for small and medium sized enterprises at the international level. It was founded in 2003 by its current president, European Parliament member Dr. Paul Rübig.  
[thomas.thaler@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:thomas.thaler@europarl.europa.eu) | [www.sme-global.info](http://www.sme-global.info)