



### HEADLINES

#### **EU / TRADE Geneva 10&11/05/2001: Trade facilitation: a priority on the WTO agenda**

The WTO recently organised a workshop on technical assistance and capacity building in trade facilitation to explore and analyse work on the simplification of trade procedures in order to assess the scope for WTO rules in this area. The workshop indicates the importance of addressing non-tariff barriers to global trade. It allowed intergovernmental organisations, donor members, recipient members and the private sector (no SMEs organisations represented) the ability to take stock of the nature and scope of past and current programmes, to ascertain areas of expertise of the various providers of technical assistance, and to develop a better understanding of the needs of recipients. Such information may be a valuable basis to develop a more cooperative and coordinated approach in the future, hopefully leading to the inclusion of trade facilitation as a priority on the agenda of a possible new WTO negotiation at the end of this year.

**ESBA IS ABOUT TO FINALISE A POSITION PAPER ON THIS MATTER AND WILL SEND IT IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE WTO IN GENEVA (SEE ESBA WEEKLY - VOL 3 - N 19).**

More info

[http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tradfa\\_e/tradfac\\_workshop\\_may01\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/tradfac_workshop_may01_e.htm)

[http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/spmm\\_e/spmm62\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/spmm_e/spmm62_e.htm)

#### **EU / TRADE Ljubljana-Brussels 12/05/2001: EC & trade issues with CEECs and LDCs**

After the EU Candidate Countries Conference on WTO and Trade Issues Ministers issued a Joint Declaration in support of the launch of a new WTO Round at the forthcoming WTO Ministerial meeting in Qatar in November this year. The round should lead to the improvement and reinforcement of existing WTO rules and disciplines in such areas as anti-dumping, clarification of the relationship between trade and the environment, as well as the establishment of rules in new areas such as investment, competition, trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement. Furthermore, it must be directed at strengthening access to markets, at developing and strengthening the rules and disciplines of the WTO and at promoting a better integration of developing countries into the Multilateral Trading System. The declaration has been put in practice directly during the UN-Least Developed Countries (LDC) conference in Brussels, where a new package of trade measures, designed to help integrate the LDC's into the global economy, was presented by the European Commission. The plans come on top of the EU's decision to open its market completely to LDC exports through its 'Everything But Arms' initiative, agreed upon earlier this year (see ESBA WEEKLY - Vol 3 - N 13). Measures consist of technical assistance, capacity building, investment promotion, and the promotion of rapid accession of LDCs to the WTO (based on a recent agreement between the EU, US, Japan and Canada). The EU has also called upon all developed countries to follow its lead in refraining from the use of anti-dumping measures against LDCs. Also during this conference the importance of the launch of a new WTO was stressed by the EU. However, there is still a considerable reticence and mitigation on the side of LDCs (e.g. demands for regulatory mechanisms to master trade liberalisation). Although there is still a lot of work to be done, WTO Director-General Mike Moore praised all efforts by ministers to narrow their differences and work

## ESBA Bulletin of 18 May 2001 – Volume 3 – Number 24

toward ensuring a successful outcome to the WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha. Mr. Moore told ministers at several conferences he visited this week that he would issue them a progress report on the Doha preparations at the end of July. He stressed that this report would not represent a deadline but would be a reality check.

More info on Ljubljana declaration: [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/trade/whats\\_new/enlarg1.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/trade/whats_new/enlarg1.htm)  
More info on trade issues related to LDCs (copy/paste full link):  
[http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=gt&do c=IP/01/714|0|RAPID&lg=EN](http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&do c=IP/01/714|0|RAPID&lg=EN)

### **EU / INDUSTRY Brussels 14&15/05/2001: Mixed Industry Council conclusions**

As reported already in last weeks' ESBA bulletin, the agenda of the Industry Council included several key issues for SMEs. The following conclusions can be drawn: - Whereas Commissioner Liikanen underlined the key policy areas where quantitative targets should be used (e.g. regulatory and administrative environment, the smooth functioning of the Internal Market, entrepreneurship, spreading innovation, access to new technology, access to finance and human capital), the Council itself made no reference to quantitative enterprise policy targets - The Council issued conclusions on the important role of and the links between SMEs, entrepreneurship, ICT and e-business, mainly referring to the recently launched GoDigital initiative, stressing the special needs and difficulties encountered by SMEs when exploiting the opportunities offered by ICT and e-business. - On the integration of the sustainable development concept into enterprise policy, the Council underlined that while the Member States are committed to integrate sustainable development in enterprise policy (by means of a strategy including objectives, a timetable for further measures and a set of indicators), one should take into account the special needs and difficulties of SMEs when measures and policies are developed, and that the dialogue with industry and other stakeholders should be reinforced on all levels on the use, development and improvement of appropriate market-based as well as voluntary approaches and by promoting and co-ordinating the exchange of experience and best practice at national level. - Finally, the conclusions following the debate on the Chemicals White Paper (the Environment and Internal Market Council already discussed the matter earlier) indicated that a large number of Member States welcomed the White Paper, but that some important aspects will have to be taken into account when implementing the strategy, such as: the need to take into account the interests of SMEs, cost-effectiveness and flexibility as to registration and approval of chemicals, the need to ensure a balanced burden-sharing between the upstream and downstream chemical industry, and a smooth adaptation of the strategy into the Internal Market and international trade.

More info (copy/paste full link), at around 60% of the link:  
<http://ue.eu.int/Newsroom/LoadDoc.cfm?MAX=1&DOC=!!!&BID=91&DID=66455&GRP=3462&LANG=1>

### **EU / ENVIRONMENT Brussels 16/05/2001: Proposal for EU strategy on Sustainable Development**

Further to the initial consultation paper (see ESBA WEEKLY - Vol 3 - N 17), the Commission has adopted its proposal for a EU strategy for Sustainable Development, to be adopted by the next European Council on 15&16 June in Gothenburg. Sustainable Development should link and integrate the economic, social and environmental objectives of societies in a balanced way with a long term perspective, whereby active involvement (via dialogue with all stakeholders) and effective implementation (measured via performance indicators) is of crucial importance to the success of the strategy. As foreseen, the proposal contains specific objectives and measures, to tackle the biggest challenges to Sustainable Development not dealt with in the Lisbon strategy already, in the field of climate change (including a new framework for energy taxation), public health, transport systems,

## ESBA Bulletin of 18 May 2001 – Volume 3 – Number 24

and biodiversity. At the same time the OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial Level adopted a final communique named "towards a sustainable future". Whereas the EC proposal for a Sustainable Development strategy and its proposed measures and objectives should be seen as complementary to and in relation with the Lisbon strategy already underway, the OECD communique presents a complete overarching approach to reach Sustainable Development by integrating economic, environmental and social objectives. Finally, the OECD Environment Ministers (whom met also at the same time) also adopted an Environmental Strategy for the Next Decade (non-binding), committing themselves to specific national actions over the next ten years to tackle the worst environmental problems, including climate change, in order to work together towards environmental sustainability. The presented US energy plans on 17 May seem rather controversial in relation to the adopted OECD Environmental Strategy and chooses in any case radical different options compared to the EU's Green Paper on energy supply.

The EC proposal on Sustainable Development can be found at:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eussd/index.htm>

OECD: Towards a sustainable future: <http://www.oecd.org/media/release/nw01-48a.htm>

See also (copy/paste full link):

[http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=gt&do c=MEMO/01/184|0|RAPID&lg=EN](http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&do c=MEMO/01/184|0|RAPID&lg=EN)

OECD: Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century: <http://www.oecd.org/media/release/nw01-46a.htm>

### **EU / SINGLE MARKET Brussels 17/05/2001: The fifth SLIM round explained**

Further to the launch of the fifth SLIM round itself (see ESBA WEEKLY - Vol 3 - N 22), the Commission now also has come up with a website where procedures and guidelines are explained and where work in progress on specific legislation can be followed up-to-date:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/en/update/slim/5phase.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/update/slim/5phase.htm)

### **EU / E-COMMERCE Brussels 17/05/2001: GoDigital grants launched**

DG Enterprise of the European Commission has published a grant theme for the follow-up of the GoDigital initiative (see ESBA WEEKLY - Vol 3 - N 15). The objective of this grant theme is to organise European, national and regional GoDigital conferences and workshops to promote the efficient use of e-business by SMEs and provide practical assistance to SMEs.

More info: <http://www.europa.eu.int/ISPO/ecommerce/godigital/opportunities.html>

**UPCOMING EVENTS** Brussels (B) 28/05/2001: Politics and Instruments for the competitiveness of European Business; Theme: Enterprise policy, competition, SMEs. Info: <http://www.sme-union.org/activities/unioncamare.htm> Brussels (B) 29/05/2001: Make it simple!; Theme: Enterprise Policy, SMEs, regulations. Info: <http://www.unice.org> Brussels (B) 30/05/2001: Bureau meeting of the SME-Union on the political priorities and future activities for SMEs in 2001/2002. Info: <http://www.sme-union.org/activities/congressPriorities.htm> Lisbon (P) 18&19/06/2001: New strategies for improved health in SME, role of social partners, policy developments and creating supportive environments; Theme: Health, competitiveness. Info: [http://www.bkk.de/gesundheit/health\\_at\\_work](http://www.bkk.de/gesundheit/health_at_work)