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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Trade Policy Committee (Full Members)
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Subject: Outcome of proceedings of the Trade Policy Committee (Full Members)
meeting on 13 July 2018

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1. Programme of the Presidency

The Presidency presented its programme and priorities for the second half of 2018. Regarding the trade area, the main priorities will be to strengthen the EU's position as a global economic player by negotiating modern and well-balanced free trade and investment agreements and pursuing work in the WTO to develop fair rules for international trade. Important legislative dossiers include the framework for screening of foreign direct investments into the EU and the regulation on trade in dual-use items.

The Presidency also presented the key dates of its calendar: informal FAC (Trade) on 4-5 October in Innsbruck; informal TPC Full Members in Vienna on 20-21 September; and formal FAC (Trade) on 9 November in Brussels.

2. WTO modernisation and negotiations

Following the European Council conclusions on 28 June 2018, in which the Commission was invited to propose a comprehensive approach to WTO modernisation in pursuit of the objectives of making the WTO more relevant and adaptive to a changing world and strengthening the WTO's effectiveness, the Commission presented its background note on the modernisation of the WTO (WK 8329/2018). The Commission also informed the Committee on the latest developments regarding the on-going negotiations on the post-Buenos Aires process.

Following the discussion, the Presidency concluded that:

- the Committee had taken note of the information provided by the Commission and the comments made by delegations regarding the latest developments on the WTO modernisation process and on-going negotiations;
- the Committee had welcomed the Commission's background note on the modernisation of the WTO and had expressed broad support for the approach suggested, while highlighting the need to stick to a united line in bilateral contacts with key players, also on the basis of a shared line to take;
- the Committee would revert to this matter on the basis of a Commission paper.

3. Preparations of trade aspects of the EU-China Summit (Beijing, 16 July 2018)

On the basis of the latest version of a consolidated draft list of outcomes of the EU-China Summit (WK 7554/2018 REV 4), the Commission briefed the Committee about the progress made on the key trade deliverables. The Chinese side confirmed what was already agreed in the High-level Economic and Trade Dialogue (HED) meeting on 25 June 2018, namely to exchange initial market access offers concerning investment negotiations, and to establish a joint working group on WTO reform. As regards the Agreement on protection of Geographical Indications (GIs), it was not possible to finalise the negotiations before the Summit. The Commission went on to outline the state of play on the language that remained open at this stage.

Following the discussion, the Presidency concluded that:

- the Committee had continued the discussion on trade aspects of the upcoming EU-China Summit;
- the Committee had broadly supported the Commission's overall approach on the different trade issues included in the joint Summit statement, as set out in document WK 7554/2018 REV 4. It had encouraged the EU's chief negotiator to defend the EU's priorities in further negotiations on the trade aspects of the Summit statement and to take due account of Member States' comments and concerns, including on GIs and the deadline for the conclusion of the negotiations.

4. Any Other Business

4.1 Ongoing work on trade relations with the US

The Commission updated the Committee about preparations for the meeting between President Juncker (to be accompanied by Commissioner Malmström) and US President Trump, scheduled to take place on 25 July 2018 in Washington, and the Commission's work in respect of the US Section 232 investigation on automotive imports.

4.2 State of play of trade negotiations with Mercosur

At the request of the FR, BE and HU delegations, the Commission debriefed the Committee about the outcome of the last round and the overall state of play in EU-Mercosur trade negotiations.
