



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 26 May 2016
(OR. en)

8974/16

LIMITE

PV/CONS 23
RELEX 402

DRAFT MINUTES¹

Subject: **3463rd** meeting of the Council of the European Union (**FOREIGN AFFAIRS/TRADE**), held in Brussels on 13 May 2016

¹ Information on Council legislative deliberations, on other cases of Council deliberations open to the public and on public debates may be found in [Addendum 1](#) to these minutes.

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1. **Adoption of the provisional agenda**
8616/16 OJ CONS 22 RELEX 353

The Council adopted the above agenda.

LEGISLATIVE DELIBERATIONS

(Public deliberation in accordance with Article 16(8) of the Treaty on European Union)

2. **Approval of the list of "A" items**
8617/16 PTS A 32

The Council adopted the "A" items as listed in doc. 6758/16.

Details on the adoption of these items are set out in the Addendum.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

3. **Approval of the list of "A" items**
8619/16 PTS A 33

The Council adopted the "A" items as listed in doc. 6758/16.

4. **EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**
= State of play

The Council had an exchange of views on the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the process towards signature and provisional application of the agreement. The Commission informed the Council that, following the translation of the agreement into all official EU languages, the Commission College would adopt a proposal in June to be transmitted before the end of June 2016 to the Council for its approval, in view of the signature of the agreement at the EU-Canada Summit scheduled for late October 2016.

Those who took the floor expressed strong support for the CETA agreement and stressed their expectation that it would be signed and concluded as a mixed agreement. Ministers underlined that this was not only a legal question; the involvement of national parliaments was also politically important for the acceptance of CETA in Member States. The Commission was invited to take Member States' views duly into account when it tables its proposal for a Council Decision on the signing of CETA. The question of the provisional application of the agreement and the political need for the prior consent of the European Parliament was also raised. Some delegations reiterated specific concerns that would need to be addressed in view of signature. The Presidency stressed that the next steps on CETA would be decided once the Commission makes its proposal, and that the role of the Council and the European Parliament would be key thereafter.

Austria made a statement which is set out in the Annex.

5. **WTO: Post-Nairobi**

8596/16 WTO 113

The Council confirmed the broad support for the Commission's proposals regarding the EU's overall strategic objectives for the post-Nairobi period, both as regards the remaining DDA issues, as well as the new issues which should be taken up in the WTO.

The Commissioner also informed Ministers on the upcoming selection process for the WTO Director-General post.

6. **EU-US TTIP negotiations**

= State of play

On the basis of Commission presentation, the Council took stock of the overall state of play in EU-US TTIP negotiations and noted a lack of serious engagement from the US side in a number of key areas of the negotiations. While reiterating the importance of achieving an ambitious and comprehensive agreement, Ministers stressed that substance was more important than speed and that a "TTIP-light" was not an option.

Many delegations expressed their concerns regarding the consequences of the recent leak of TTIP reading room documents, especially the possibility of a reduction in Member States' access to negotiating documents.

The Presidency indicated that, together with the incoming Slovak Presidency, it would consider when would be the best time after the July negotiating round to take stock of the situation on TTIP.

7. **Steel Communication: trade-related aspects**

8599/16 WTO 115 COMER 55 ANTIDUMPING 4 STIS 3

The Council discussed the recent Commission Communication on Steel from a trade angle on the basis of a discussion paper prepared by the Commission. The German and French delegations also circulated a paper with ideas on the modernisation of the EU's trade defence instruments. Although Ministers underlined the need for progress on modernisation of trade defence instruments in the face of the current steel crisis and welcomed some avenues put forward by the Commission, views remained divided on certain elements. It was noted that discussions would continue in the relevant Council working party.

8. Any other business

No issues were raised under this item.

During lunch, Ministers took stock of the state of play concerning the conflict minerals regulation following the trilogue meeting held in Strasbourg on 11 May 2016. The discussion on the Steel Communication started in the formal session was also concluded during lunch. Furthermore, the Commission informed Ministers of the recent exchange of offers between the EU and Mercosur in the context of the restarting of FTA negotiations.

STATEMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL MINUTES

Ad "B" item 4: **EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**
 = State of Play

STATEMENT BY AUSTRIA

"In their meeting on 11 May, the Austrian provinces decided that the Federal Government should seek to 'prevent any provisional application of CETA being decided in the Council'.

The existing high quality standards (for instance on product safety and the protection of data, consumers, health, the environment and animals) must be maintained.

Free trade agreements should be concluded as mixed agreements."
