



Council of the  
European Union

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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Update on negotiations for agriculture running up to the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (Geneva, 30 November - 3 December 2021) <i>- Information from the Commission</i>

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Delegations will find in Annex an updated background note on the above-mentioned subject.

Documents ST 13493/21 and WK 13053/2021 INIT, containing respectively a proposal for a Council Decision for on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the World Trade Organization's 12th Ministerial Conference, and the related Council conclusions, currently being discussed at the Trade Policy Committee and in Coreper, also contain relevant information on this issue.

The WTO's twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC12) will take place from 30 November to 3 December 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Preparatory negotiations are continuing. In terms of the agriculture segment, everything is still on the table at this point in time, including domestic support, export competition, export restrictions, public stockholding and market access.

However, given the significant differences between the positions of WTO members, the most realistic deliverable at MC12 seems to be a less technical version of the transparency initiative of the EU and its partners, and work programs on several other issues for the future. A positive outcome on the proposal to exempt the World Food Program purchases from export restrictions is possible but not certain, mainly due to India's objections. A positive outcome of the review of the Bali decision on tariff rate quota administration seems within reach pending approval by the WTO's General Council on 22-23 November. Potential work programmes on agriculture and also specifically on trade distorting domestic support and the issue of public stockholding are also possible though substantial divergences remain.

The EU is also working with like-minded countries on a possible Joint Declaration in the framework of Trade and Environmental Sustainability. Commission Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis' call to build an international coalition of trade ministers to promote trade in green goods and services and to convene a ministerial meeting in 2022 devoted to trade, climate and sustainability is related to this effort.

As usual, the Council of the European Union (FAC/TRADE formation) and its Trade Policy Committee will be meeting in the margins of the Conference in Geneva in order to react to any developments during its deliberations and to guide the Commission accordingly. For this purpose a Council Decision (ST 13493/21) and Council conclusions (WK 13053/2021 INIT) on the Union's Position on the Conference are currently being prepared by the Trade Policy Committee, and the Permanent Representative Committee, to be ready for adoption by the Council at the start and at the end of the Conference.