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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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## **PRESS RELEASE**

3136th Council meeting

**Foreign Affairs**

**Trade**

Geneva, 14 December 2011

President

**Ms Hanna TROJANOWSKA**  
Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Economy of Poland

# **P R E S S**

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## **Main results of the Council**

*The Council met in Geneva to prepare the 8th ministerial conference of the **World Trade Organisation** on 15-17 December.*

*The Council approved the accession of **Russia** and **Samoa** to the WTO. The decision will be taken at the WTO ministerial conference.*

*The Council also gave the go-ahead to the Commission to start bilateral negotiations with **Egypt, Jordan, Morocco** and **Tunisia**, with a view to establishing "deep and comprehensive" free trade areas.*

*Other decisions taken by the Council include EU support for the granting of a waiver enabling WTO members to give preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of **least-developed countries**.*

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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**ITEMS DEBATED****WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

The Council held an exchange of views in preparation for the 8th ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation, to be held at WTO headquarters in Geneva on 15-17 December. It also discussed negotiations on government procurement agreement market access.

While no breakthrough is expected in the Doha Development Agenda negotiations during this ministerial conference, the Council reiterated its commitment to an ambitious and comprehensive outcome to the meeting. The Council also emphasised the crucial role of the WTO in the current economic and financial crisis and endorsed its efforts to provide an effective monitoring process to counter protectionism.

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED****TRADE POLICY****Accession of Samoa to the WTO**

The Council adopted a decision approving, on behalf of the EU, Samoa's accession to the WTO. The decision will be taken by the WTO at its 8th ministerial conference, to be held in Geneva on 15-17 December.

**Accession of Russia to the WTO**

The Council adopted a decision approving, on behalf of the EU, Russia's accession to the WTO. The decision will be taken by the WTO at its 8th ministerial conference, to be held in Geneva on 15-17 December.

As part of a broader package, the Council also approved the signing<sup>1</sup> of four bilateral agreements with Russia, which are set out in the Protocol of Accession to the WTO:

- administration of tariff-rate quotas applying to exports of wood from Russia to the EU;
- a compensation mechanism to ensure that imports of parts and components of motor vehicle from the EU to Russia do not decrease as a result of the application of the investment regime in the automotive sector;
- maintenance of commitments on trade in services contained in the current EU-Russia partnership and cooperation agreement;
- introduction or increase by Russia of export duties on raw materials.

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<sup>1</sup> The signing is expected to take place on 16 December at the Russian Embassy in Geneva.

**Free trade agreements with Southern Mediterranean countries**

The Council authorised the Commission to open bilateral negotiations with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, with a view to establishing "deep and comprehensive" free trade areas, as part of the existing Euro-Mediterranean association agreements with those countries. Talks will start as soon as possible.

**Preferential treatment for least-developed countries**

The Council adopted a decision approving, on behalf of the EU, the granting by the WTO ministerial conference of a waiver enabling WTO members to give preferential treatment to services and service suppliers of least-developed countries.

**Anti-dumping - Steel pipes and tubes - China**

The Council adopted a regulation imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and collecting definitively the provisional duty imposed on imports of certain seamless pipes and tubes of stainless steel originating in China ([17401/11](#)).

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