



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 6 June 2023
(OR. en)

8886/23

LIMITE

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LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Subject:	COUNCIL DECISION authorising the opening of negotiations for agreements on digital trade disciplines with the Republic of Korea and with Singapore
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COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2023/...

of ...

**authorising the opening of negotiations
for agreements on digital trade disciplines
with the Republic of Korea and with Singapore**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular
Article 207(4), first subparagraph, in conjunction with Article 218(3) and (4) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The Union and the Republic of Korea ('Korea'), and the Union and Singapore, respectively, have a deep and dynamic economic relationship. Korea and Singapore are close strategic partners of the Union in the Indo-Pacific region and significant trading partners for the Union in Asia. The Union has had a Free Trade Agreement with Korea since 2011 and a Free Trade Agreement with Singapore since 2019. These Free Trade Agreements provide for substantial commitments for trade in goods and services between the parties, but they do not include comprehensive rules on digital trade.
- (2) In line with the September 2021 European Union strategy for the Indo-Pacific, the Union has sought deeper cooperation with Korea and with Singapore on digital trade. The Union and Korea entered into a Digital Partnership on 28 November 2022 and in that context agreed non-binding Digital Trade Principles on 30 November 2022. The Union and Singapore entered into a Digital Partnership on 1 February 2023, and agreed non-binding Digital Trade Principles on 31 January 2023.
- (3) The Digital Trade Principles agreed with Korea and with Singapore demonstrate a high level of convergence with the Union's approach to digital trade.

- (4) The Union has agreed digital trade rules in several bilateral free trade agreement negotiations with third countries. The Union is also participating in a number of negotiations as part of which digital trade rules are being developed, the ongoing negotiations on electronic commerce within the WTO. Therefore, it is appropriate to authorise the Commission to open negotiations on binding digital trade disciplines that are coherent with these agreements and pursue the same objectives that the Union intends to achieve in the ongoing negotiations.
- (5) The European Data Protection Supervisor was consulted in accordance with Article 42(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹ and delivered an opinion on 15 May 2023²,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

¹ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39).

² Opinion of 15 May 2023 (not yet published in the Official Journal).

Article 1

The Commission is hereby authorised to open negotiations, on behalf of the Union, for agreements on digital trade disciplines with the Republic of Korea and with Singapore.

The negotiations shall be conducted on the basis of the negotiating directives of the Council set out in the addendum to this Decision.

Article 2

The Commission is hereby nominated as the Union negotiator.

Article 3

The negotiations shall be conducted in consultation with the Trade Policy Committee (Experts – Services and Investment).

Article 4

This Decision is addressed to the Commission.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council

The President
