

Welcome message by Pascal Lamy

*Dear Parliamentarian,
In speaking with many of you in recent months I have heard you express a desire to be better informed of developments at the WTO.*

You've expressed interest in a wide range of issues, but you've also made clear that given your busy agendas, you simply do not have the time to wade through large numbers of emails, documents or website notices.

We listened carefully to what you have said and the result is this news letter which we are sending to all Parliamentarians in our data base and any others who may be interested. This newsletter is tailored specifically to you and your interests. It will inform you each month in a concise and clear way on developments here Geneva over the past month.

The newsletter is part of broader programme of enhanced outreach that we have launched with Parliamentarians around the world. We have also improved and expanded our Parliamentarian data base and have increased our outreach to you.

We know there is more we can do and we would very much welcome your thoughts on how we can accomplish this. Your suggestions are most welcome at wto4mps@wto.org. If you are not listed in our data base and would like to be part of our network, please contact us at wto4mps@wto.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

In the meantime, we hope that you enjoy this newsletter and that you find it useful.

*With my best wishes,
PASCAL LAMY*



Director-General Pascal Lamy

Coming events

- 25-29 May Geneva Week
- 27-28 May WTO General Council
- 9-12 June Parliamentarians Workshop: ASEAN Countries
- 10-12 June Trade Policy Review – New Zealand
- 24-26 June Trade Policy Review – Morocco
- 6-7 July Second Global Review of Aid for Trade

Activities at the WTO

General Council: Appointment of DG Lamy

Geneva, 29-30 April

Running unopposed, Pascal Lamy was unanimously reconfirmed for the top job by WTO Membership. In his presentation to the GC, Mr Lamy firmly stated that the WTO does not need any "major surgery", only a "long to-do list" to reinforce its role as the global trade body. The list included four major areas. First of all, negotiations and the conclusion of the Doha Round as fundamental in delivering predictability, stability and confidence to the trading system. Secondly, he stressed the need for improving implementation, recognising the fragility of surveillance and transparency as striking against the sophistication and solidity of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism. Thirdly, internal and external coherence was highly advocated, suggesting an increase of informal sessions and seminars with Members and a strategy to strengthen the bridges with other intergovernmental organizations. Finally, the outgoing/incoming DG called for a boost to outreach activities: improve interaction with small non-resident delegations; address the concerns of

acceding Members; enhance NGOs' accreditation process. All of this to be complemented by a more effective communication strategy directed to the general public. In conclusion, Mr Lamy stressed his desire to resume WTO ministerial meetings as a regular exercise to assess and develop WTO activities.

Director-General Report to the Trade Policy Review Body: Financial and Economic Crisis and Trade-Related Developments

Geneva, 14 April

Slowdown of world growth, collapse of global demand, contraction of trade volumes and shortage of trade finance are clear symptoms of an imminent recession and of a world economy that is presently too weak to counteract the inexorable downturn. The multilateral trading system already in place provides a valuable defence mechanism against protectionist actions. However, the "devil is in the details" and the present set of rules leaves too many loopholes that require vigilance. The Director-General warns against the risks of trade-restricting policies and advocates that the best safeguard against an escalation into protectionism remains a collective decision by WTO members to conclude the Doha Round.

Trade Policy Reviews

The Trade Policy Review Mechanism is a system of surveillance of members' trade policies. All WTO Members are regularly reviewed according to their share of world trade. In April, the following countries were reviewed:

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES 6 and 8 April

The European Communities has been praised for strongly advocating an ambitious conclusion of the Doha Round of negotiations as the best insurance against protectionism. Concerns were raised on the EC's regime on technical barriers to trade and on the complex tariff structure in agriculture. The EC's response to those concern pointed to the need to conclude the DDA, under which it has committed to cut overall trade distorting support by 80% and eliminate all export subsidies by 2013. Further worries were expressed on the increasing focus of the EC on Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs). A request was made to the EC to consider the discriminatory elements of its PTAs and to ponder over the possibility of harnessing the advantages of market opening on a MFN basis. Next TPR for the EC is scheduled for 2011.

MOZAMBIQUE 22 and 24 April

Despite the positive economic performance compared to the 2001 Review, Mozambique remains one of the poorest least developed countries, with poor institutional capacity, administrative setbacks and supply-side constraints still hindering its development potentials. Trade has gradually picked up some speed. Nonetheless, it still seems to be confined to export sectors under preferential agreements. The suggested way forward is to explore the possibility

Photo European Parliament

of trade diversification and to deeply engage in Aid for Trade and other technical assistance initiatives.

SOLOMON ISLANDS 6 and 8 May

Since its first Review in 1998, Solomon Islands was able to liberalize the investment regime, reduce tariffs and undertake custom reforms. However, concerns were expressed by other WTO members on the unsustainable nature of its recent economic growth based on the exploitation of its tropical forests. Solomon Islands' Minister, William Haomae, firmly committed every possible effort to comply with WTO disciplines. But he also sought additional technical and financial assistance, in the form of increased and effective Aid for Trade, in order to fulfil its commitments on customs valuation, SPS and TBIs. Next TPR for Solomon Islands is expected to be held in 2015.

Negotiations in Brief

New Chair for the Agriculture Negotiations

On 22 April, New Zealand Ambassador David Walker was appointed as the new chairperson for the Agriculture Committee, in lieu of Ambassador Crawford Falconer. The term for the Agriculture Committee Chair runs for a period of around two years, from one ministerial conference to another. His role is that of coordinating negotiations talk on the highly delicate and dividing agricultural issues within the DDA negotiations.

Dispute Settlement within WTO

Public Hearing for the US- "Zeroing" case

The Appellate Body opens its hearing on the dispute "United States – Zeroing" case to public viewing. The issue concerns the methodology used by the US in calculating anti-dumping margins, which was found to result in "amounts of anti-dumping duties that exceed the foreign producers' or exporters' margins of dumping". A deadline for compliance was set for April 2007. However, the compliance panel report issued on the 24 April, following a request from Japan, found that the US has yet not fully complied with the recommendations of the DSB and urged it to do so in conformity with WTO agreements.

Public hearing for the "EC- IT products" case

A decision was taken by the Panel to open its meeting with the parties on the 12-14 May to public hearing. The case concerns the imposition of duties by the European Communities and its member States on certain information technology products, contrary to the duty-free treatment committed under the Information Technology Agreement.

Panel report on "Colombia – Ports of Entry" case

The Panel's report on the Indicative Prices and Restrictions on Ports of Entry found Colombia's measures inconsistent with the obligations under the Customs Valuation Agreement. The compliant, Panama, alleged a discriminatory treatment for tax sales on imported and domestic products on behalf of the Colombian authorities.

Aid for Trade

North-South Corridor Conference

Lusaka, 6 April

The North-South Corridor comprises the Dar es Salaam Corridor, linking the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania with the Copperbelt and the corridor linking the Copperbelt to the southern ports in South Africa. The Director-General commended the initiative as "a perfect example of Aid for Trade in action" that creates the "conditions necessary for the private sector to diversify from exporting a narrow range of raw material and add more value." A higher level of regional integration and political commitment are essential for the success of the initiative.

Second Regional Review on Aid for Trade

Montego Bay, 7 and 8 May

Director-General Pascal Lamy, in his address to the Latin America and the Caribbean High-Level Aid for Trade Meeting in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 7 May 2009, said: "Aid for Trade will help developing countries prepare for after the crisis. By building their productive capacity, they will unlock their growth potential and this will help them take advantage of existing and new trade opportunities."

Outreach Activities for Parliamentarians

Through its Trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) activities and programmes WTO aims at fostering greater understanding of and interest in the multilateral trading system, informing parliamentarians on the basic operations of the WTO, encouraging dialogue and the exchange of ideas on trade-related issues of particular relevance to their regions. In 2009, WTO has realised the following workshops for parliamentarians:

18-20/02/2009 Caribbean Region, Antigua and Barbuda
23-25/03/2009 Arab Region, United Arab Emirates



Participants to the Caribbean Region Workshop

We would like to hear from you

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8-10 July Trade Policy Review – Guyana

- 27-29 July Trade Policy Review – Zambia

- 28-29 July WTO General Council



New Zealand Ambassador David Walker

- 22-24 September Trade Policy Review – Southern African Custom Union (SACU)

- 28-30 September WTO Public Forum

- Oct/November 2009 Parliamentary Workshop for Francophone Africa