

Press release
30.07.2008



FTA
Foreign Trade Association

WHY SHOULD DOHA BE ALLOWED TO DIE?

The Foreign Trade Association (FTA) would like to add its voice to those expressing a deep regret over the failure of negotiations at the WTO Mini-Ministerial held in Geneva from July 21st to the 29th. The opportunity to reach an ambitious outcome for the Doha Round by lowering barriers to trade while also creating new market access opportunities has yet again been missed.

The FTA hopes that, after a suitable cooling off period, WTO member states will recommit to the offers that they put on the table during this Mini-Ministerial and redouble their efforts to conclude the Doha Round. A disagreement between the U.S, India, and to a lesser extent China, has scuttled a deal that would benefit 150 other WTO member countries. The EU was ready to commit to substantial liberalization, offering to phase out agricultural subsidies by 2013, reducing its industrial tariffs, and allowing greater market access for foreign services providers. When the time comes to reengage in negotiations, we hope that the EU will not back away from the commitments it made during this Mini-Ministerial.

Offers made by the various countries participating in a Services Signalling Conference, held on Saturday July 26th during the Mini-Ministerial, were considerable. The FTA was pleased with the broad range of “signals” given by participating countries in areas such as Distribution Services and Transport Services as well as in Commercial Presence (Mode 3) and in the Movement of Natural Persons (Mode 4).

From the perspective of FTA members it is particularly disappointing that a development-friendly Trade Facilitation agreement remains elusive. Moreover, in the absence of a WTO Agreement member states will instead focus their efforts on signing Bilateral Free Trade Agreements.

FTA Secretary General Jan Eggert points out that “[T]his direction is, at best, only a partial substitute to a multilateral agreement. The world economy has now been without a comprehensive trade agreement for eight (8) years. Over this time some WTO member states have reduced trade barriers while others have created new impediments. FTA member companies need security through binding commitments on tariff levels and a clear set of international rules that are the least trade restrictive and reflect current economic

realities.”

The FTA is the association for European commerce that specialises in foreign trade issues. It is committed to achieving its goal of a true free trade environment. For 30 years it has supported its members, consisting of national trade associations and companies from all over Europe, by providing expertise and up-to-date information and by campaigning on their behalf against protectionist measures in the European and international arena.

IMPRESSUM / CONTACT

FTA - Foreign Trade Association
168, Av. De Cortenbergh
B-1000
Bruxelles

Tel: 0032-2-762 05 51
Fax: 0032-2-762 75 06
Email: info@fta-eu.org
Internet: www.fta-eu.org