

Press release  
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FTA  
Foreign Trade Association

## EUROPEAN COMMERCE SEES LIGHT AND SHADOW AFTER WTO MINISTERIAL IN GENEVA

**"A clear way out of the deadlock of the WTO Doha Development agenda has not been found. However, we have to acknowledge that the World Trade Organisation fulfills its role as guardian of the international trade agreements and is also prepared to address new challenges for international trade", states FTA Secretary General Jan Eggert after the end of the 8th Ministerial Conference in Geneva that closed on 17 December.**

Expectations for the 8th WTO Ministerial Conference after 10 years of negotiating the Doha Development Agenda without concrete results had been low. However, this Ministerial showed that the WTO does not only consist of the Doha Agenda but that it acts as the acknowledged framework for international trade bringing more than 150 governments to the negotiation table and being also able to produce positive results.

The FTA sees three main achievements of this conference:

- The accession of four new members to the WTO, in particular the Russian Federation after 18 years of negotiation.
- An agreement of 42 countries on a revision of the Government Procurement Agreement after 10 years of negotiations. This agreement will lead to further liberalise billions of Euro in public contracts.
- A package for Least Developed Countries which shall make the access to the WTO and the integration into the international trading system easier.

However, Geneva showed that finding routes for concrete progress within the Doha Development Agenda with a multitude of complex trade issues is still a big challenge for the WTO. Also new trade issues like competition rules, investment and food security are waiting to be addressed.

"The WTO has still a long way to go to address all the challenges of today's international

trade adequately and live up to the expectations of European Commerce. We are encouraging the EU to continue to play the constructive role in this process it has played thus far making the WTO an even stronger fortress against protectionism", said FTA Secretary General Jan Eggert.

*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.*

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