



④ Conclude an ambitious WTO Doha Round

“Business needs an open, rules-based multilateral system so trade can boost growth and competitiveness”

BACKGROUND

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) – as the only international institution promoting trade liberalisation, predictability and legal security – is crucial for European business. Bilateral and regional agreements are no substitute for the multilateral trading system. An ambitious conclusion of the Doha Round is essential for companies to ensure that international trade is fair and as free from restrictions as possible. Completing the Doha Round would send a signal that the WTO can shape globalisation to deliver huge economic benefits, while countering the tendency towards protectionism and unilateralism. The Doha Round will also help integrate developing countries into the world economy through increased trade and reduced market distortions.

An ambitious conclusion of the Doha Round

The latest draft negotiating texts published in December 2008 provide sufficient progress to conclude a Doha deal in the very near term. This progress should not be lost and WTO members should build on the substantial advances made in agricultural tariff liberalisation and subsidy reductions to finalise now the industrial and services market opening. According to WTO calculations, a successful Doha Round would be equivalent to a stimulus package of € 107 billion for the world economy.

Open markets for industrial goods

The Doha Round must deliver effective new industrial market access for business. The elimination of OECD and emerging countries tariff peaks should be achieved through an ambitious tariff-cutting formula. Voluntary sectoral agreements should also be agreed in key sectors of EU export interest with full participation from major emerging countries to generate new trade opportunities.

Removal of non-tariff barriers

The growing problem of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) is undermining the competitiveness of EU industries and distorting international markets. BUSINESSEUROPE strongly supports proposals to create a WTO mediation mechanism for resolving NTBs, to eliminate export taxes and restrictions and to remove specific sectoral NTBs.

Progress on services

Services trade accounts for more than 20% of global exports. The liberalisation of services will generate new export opportunities, help attract investment, improve access to world class services and contribute to local development for all WTO members. The Doha Round should include an ambitious services deal with substantial and commercially meaningful new market access and greater legal certainty for EU services exporters in key sectors and countries.

Improved rules

A binding and reviewable WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, which includes core standards to reduce border delays and costs, would create a level playing field for WTO members and facilitate trade for companies. Businesses could save billions of Euros per year in trade transaction costs. BUSINESSEUROPE also supports an ambitious agreement on harmonised interpretation and implementation of anti-dumping rules and a much stricter anti-subsidy agreement, covering in particular dual pricing of raw materials and energy. Moreover, BUSINESSEUROPE is a strong supporter of the existing TRIPS Agreement which provides the necessary stability into the disciplines that regulate global innovation and technology flows.