

**REPORT (2011) OF THE
COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS
TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

Chairman: Mr. François Riegert (France)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its first meeting in March 2011, the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA) elected Mr. François Riegert (France) as Chairman of the CRTA.
2. During 2011, the Committee held four sessions (in March, June, September and November). The minutes of those meetings are listed in the Attachment. Four sessions are foreseen in 2012.

II. OBSERVER STATUS

3. The Committee agreed to continue the granting of observer status in the CRTA to the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), on an *ad hoc* basis. No decision was taken with respect to the requests for observer status listed in document WT/REG/W/11/Add.3.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

4. In the period 1 January to 15 October 2011, the CRTA received 19 notifications of RTAs, 11 in goods, notified under Article XXIV of GATT 1994, and 8 in services, notified under Article V of GATS.¹
5. During 2011, 13 factual presentations were distributed reflecting 18 notifications, counting goods and services separately, all of which were used as the basis for consideration of RTAs in the CRTA.²
6. Under paragraph 22(b) of the Transparency Mechanism (TM)³, in 2011, one factual abstract of an RTA for which the CRTA has concluded its factual examination under Article XXIV of GATT 1994 was prepared and sent to the Parties for comments; comments are still awaited on two others.⁴

¹ Hong Kong, China-New Zealand (G&S); EFTA-Albania (G); Turkey-Chile (G); Turkey-Jordan (G); EFTA-Peru (G); EU-Rep. of Korea (G&S); Guatemala-TPKM (G&S); Peru-Rep. of Korea (G&S); India-Malaysia (S); EFTA-Colombia (G&S); India-Japan (G&S); Canada-Colombia (G&S).

² Japan-Switzerland (G&S); Costa Rica-Panama (G&S); China-Pakistan (S); Japan-Viet Nam (G&S); Japan-Thailand (G&S); European Union-Croatia (S); European Union-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (S); European Union-Serbia (G); European Union-Montenegro (G&S); Turkey-Montenegro (G); European Union-Albania (S); Turkey-Serbia (G); Chile-China (S).

³ The General Council Decision of 14 December establishing the Transparency Mechanism for Regional Trade Agreements (WT/L/671) is being implemented on a provisional basis. Members will review,

IV. EARLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. Paragraph 1 of the TM provides for Members participating in new negotiations and parties to a newly signed RTA to provide information to the Secretariat, to be posted on the WTO website. In 2011, a total of 9 early announcements were received from Members, 5 for RTAs under negotiation and 4 for newly signed RTAs;⁵ two of these early announcements were made for RTAs involving non-WTO Members.

V. SUBSEQUENT NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING

8. Paragraph 14 of the TM provides for changes affecting the implementation of an RTA, or the operation of an already implemented RTA to be notified as soon as possible after such changes occur. Such communications are to be made available on the WTO website. In the period 1 January to 15 October 2011, notifications of changes for three RTAs had been received and posted on the RTA Database.⁶

9. Paragraph 15 of the TM provides for parties to an RTA to submit a short written report on the realization of the liberalization commitments in the RTA as originally notified at the end of the RTA's implementation period. No such reports were submitted during 2011.

VI. DATABASE ON RTAS

10. Paragraph 21 of the TM provides for the Secretariat to establish and maintain an updated electronic database on individual RTAs. The database was launched in January 2009 and is available on the WTO public website. The database provides information on all notified RTAs, including the status of the consideration process. In 2011, some Members stated in document WT/REG/W/60 that there were inconsistencies in the database with respect to the consideration status of RTAs⁷ and requested they be amended.

VII. PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE AND FACILITATE THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

11. No discussion took place on this item.

VIII. SYSTEMIC IMPLICATIONS OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS AND INITIATIVES FOR THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM

12. At its 62nd and 63rd Sessions in September and November 2011, the Committee discussed proposals on RTAs for the 8th Ministerial Conference co-sponsored by several Members - documents WT/REG/W/61 and Add.1, dated 20 and 27 September 2011; document WT/REG/W/63/Rev.1, dated 25 October 2011, and document WT/REG/W/65, dated 28 October 2011. No consensus was reached on these proposals during these two Sessions.

and if necessary modify, this decision, in light of the experience gained from its provisional operation, and replace it by a permanent mechanism as part of the overall results of the Doha Round, in accordance with paragraph 47 of the Doha Declaration (paragraph 23 of the General Council's Decision).

⁴ EU (25) Enlargement (G); EFTA-FYROM (G) and EFTA-Morocco (G); all of these are notified under Article XXIV of the GATT 1994.

⁵ Under negotiation: Canada-Ukraine; Switzerland-China; EFTA-Bosnia and Herzegovina; EFTA-Indonesia; EFTA-Russia/Belarus/Kazakhstan. Newly signed: Costa Rica-Peru; Costa Rica-Singapore; Panama-Peru; The Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA).

⁶ EFTA-Chile; EFTA-Turkey; EFTA-Croatia.

⁷ India-Rep. of Korea RTA and ASEAN-Rep. of Korea RTA.

IX. FINAL REMARKS

13. In an effort to encourage the notification of non-notified RTAs, the Chairman with the help of the Secretariat, drew up a list of non-notified RTAs which are in the process of being verified by their parties as being in force and appeared in factual presentations circulated between September 2009 and March 2011. This list and Members' feedback hereon will be updated and circulated in advance of future CRTA meetings.

14. In February 2011, following a request from the Chairman of the Negotiating Group on Rules, the Chairman of the CRTA provided a brief statement, in his own capacity, of the CRTA's experience in implementing the Transparency Mechanism (document JOB/RL/1/Rev.1).

15. Although considerable progress has been made in the preparation of factual presentations, the Committee continues to experience some difficulties in adhering to the timelines under the TM. This is due to a number of factors: delays in the receipt of statistical data from parties, data discrepancies in Members' submissions, and delays in the receipt of comments from parties.

ATTACHMENT

Minutes of the Meetings held in 2011

Sixtieth Session –14-15 March 2011

WT/REG/M/60

WT/REG273/M/1	Japan - Switzerland, goods and services
WT/REG281/M/1	Peru - China, goods and services
WT/REG264/M/1	Costa Rica - Panama, goods and services

Sixty-first Session – 28 June 2011

WT/REG/M/61

WT/REG237/M/2	China - Pakistan, services
WT/REG275/M/1	Japan - Viet Nam, goods and services
WT/REG235/M/1	Japan - Thailand, goods and services
WT/REG142/M/3	European Union - Croatia, services
WT/REG129/M/3	European Union - the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, services
WT/REG285/M/1	European Union - Serbia, goods [non-Member]
WT/REG236/M/1	European Union - Montenegro, goods and services [non-Member]
WT/REG282/M/1	Turkey - Montenegro, goods [non-Member]

Sixty-second Session – 22-23 September 2011

WT/REG/M/62

WT/REG226/M/2	European Union - Albania, services
WT/REG288/M/1	Turkey - Serbia, goods [non-Member]

Sixty-third Session – 9, 15 and 18 November 2011 (to be issued)

WT/REG/M/63

WT/REG230/M/2	Chile - China, services
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