



PRESS RELEASE

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EUROPEAN SERVICE INDUSTRIES CALL FOR URGENT MOVE INTO THE SERVICES COMPONENT FOR A FINAL WTO BALANCED DEAL

The European Services Forum (ESF) today welcomed the two revised Chairman's papers on agriculture and non agricultural trade in the framework of Doha round. The publication of both texts mark an essential outcome in the WTO talks and pave the way for a long awaited horizontal process where trade offs with other crucial issues like services market access will finally be discussed.

"It is time for the negotiations to finally enter into a final stage" said Christoffer Taxell, Chairman of ESF. "There is an urgent need for the negotiations to now take a much wider focus that must include services market access. Although the negotiation on services involves a different pattern, it is nonetheless as important for international trade as the negotiations on agriculture and industrial goods. Trade negotiators must now engage at the highest level in global trade talks and this requires that all the issues be on the table. A round without a strong services package will not be balanced, so let's now discuss services at the ministerial level".

ESF calls for the release of a text on services as soon as possible so as to ensure that services is one of the three key market access pillars of the Doha Round of global trade talks along with agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA). That text on services should provide political guidance on the level of ambition for services negotiations.

The European services business community urges the European Union to do its utmost to make sure that the conditions will be ripe for a ministerial meeting in Geneva in the coming weeks, and supports the European Commission as the EU negotiator to move forward in that direction. This will be an opportunity to convene a ministerial signalling conference on services, where ministers of emerging countries like Brazil, China, India, etc. will indicate in which services sectors they would be ready to engage in further liberalisation. Without these forward looking indications in the services sector, the trade discussions are missing a crucial element of the puzzle. The signalling conference is a crucial step allowing us to proceed towards the conclusion of a WTO deal. Proper negotiations on services will only start once the modalities on agriculture and NAMA have been adopted. It is therefore urgent to enter into this final phase.

The European Services Forum (ESF) is a network of representatives from the European services sector, comprising major multinational companies and European sector specific trade associations. It is committed to actively promoting the interests of the European services sector and the liberalisation of services markets throughout the world in connection with the WTO negotiations as well as with the EU's regional and bilateral trade negotiations.

For further information please contact Mr. Pascal Kerneis, Managing Director, European Services Forum (p.kerneis@esf.be, +32 4476 321 027) or consult www.esf.be.
