

EUROPEAN SERVICES FORUM

The benefits of Membership

- 1 The European Services Forum is the voice of the European services industry in international trade and investment negotiations.** ESF represents a wide range of service industries including banking, insurance, telecommunications, postal and delivery services, aviation, shipping, construction, retail distribution, legal services, accountancy, management consultancy, architecture, IT services, audio-visual, education services.
- 2 ESF is the only organisation covering all issues of importance to the EU services sector.** International trade and investment in services, including through public procurement, is fast becoming the most important part of international trade. The added value of today's global value chain relates to the business services that are incorporated into the products that are traded around the world. Indeed, many aspects that are essential to efficient performance for trade in goods are effectively negotiated under the services & investment chapters of trade deals such as cross border data flows, commercial presence abroad and temporary mobility of high skilled personnel (maintenance & repair, recognition of qualifications, etc.).
- 3 ESF is a unique organisation owing to the way services are negotiated under international agreements.** Services liberalisation is conducted through a horizontal process that covers all services sectors. This is the case in the multilateral process of the WTO, plurilateral negotiations such as "Trade in Services Agreement" (TiSA) and in the bilateral trade agreements that the European Union is currently negotiating. As a result, ESF is actively engaging with all on-going or future trade and investment negotiations and ratifications, including with Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mercosur, Mexico, New-Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, US, and Vietnam.
- 4 ESF is an important EU stakeholder with an unparalleled network.** Within the EU, ESF is a strong partner of policymakers in the trade sphere. Our network includes Commissioners, Commission negotiators, MEPs, national governments and EU and national chambers of commerce. ESF is a member of Commission Advisory Groups on relevant trade policy which means we have a seat at the table. We target our engagement activity to chime with key milestones in the policy-formation process.
- 5 Our diverse membership and international reach allows ESF to influence policy.** As the stakeholder at the core of the services sector liberalisation process, ESF is best placed to gather intelligence, analyse and ultimately shape the direction of services liberalisation in a range of international trade agreements. By leveraging our relationships with similar organisations in third countries, ESF establishes a presence with both sides of the negotiating process, thereby maximising our influence.
- 6 ESF has a strong international reputation.** We work closely with our sister organisations in countries such as Australia, Hong-Kong, Japan, US and together we form the Global Services Coalition. Our cooperation with European business organisations in third countries gives ESF a foothold into those countries with whom the EU is negotiating trade agreements. In addition, we offer networking opportunities with the WTO Secretariat, WTO negotiators in Geneva and negotiators from jurisdictions with whom the EU is negotiating trade agreements.
- 7 ESF follows all issues of relevance so that our members don't have to.** We recognise that trade negotiations are complex and that companies and organisations do not have the resources to cover these issues in detail. ESF provides a service which ensures that members are regularly informed and on top of policy developments affecting their business choices.
- 8 ESF membership fees are highly competitive and we are flexible in the way we work.** Owing to our lean organisational structure, we are efficient, practical and effective. Our diverse membership ranging from multinational companies to national business associations means we must be flexible in order to achieve results. All engagement activity is driven through the ESF Policy Committee and our 'opt-out' approval system allows for smooth decision-making.

Get in touch to find out more
about ESF member benefits!

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