



**REPORT (2014) OF THE
COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS
TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL**

CHAIRMAN: MR FRANCISCO PIREZ GORDILLO (URUGUAY)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. At its first meeting in April 2014, the Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA) elected Mr Francisco Pirez Gordillo (Uruguay) as Chairman of the CRTA.

1.2. During 2014, the Committee held four sessions (in April, June, September and November). The minutes of those meetings are listed in the Attachment. Four sessions are foreseen in 2015.

2 OBSERVER STATUS

2.1. 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.

3 CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

3.1. In the period 1 January to 15 October 2014, the CRTA received 16 notifications of RTAs, 8 in goods, notified under Article XXIV of GATT 1994, and 8 in services, notified under Article V of GATS.¹

3.2. During 2014, 23 factual presentations were distributed reflecting 42 notifications, counting goods and services separately, all of which were used as the basis for consideration of RTAs in the CRTA.²

3.3. The Chairman held consultations with delegations in an effort to resolve the case of RTAs for which the factual consideration is delayed due to lack of comments from the Parties. The Chairman with the help of the Secretariat drew up and circulated in advance of CRTA meetings a list of such RTAs.³

¹ Mexico - Central America (G&S); Singapore - the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (G&S); Switzerland - China (G&S); European Union - Republic of Moldova (G&S); European Union - Ukraine (G&S); European Union - Georgia (G&S); Iceland - China (G&S); Hong Kong, China - Chile (G&S).

² Chile - Malaysia (G); Canada - Jordan (G); Canada - Panama (G&S); Republic of Korea - Turkey (G); Panama - Central America (Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala (G&S) (six notifications); European Union (28) Enlargement (G&S); European Union - Bosnia and Herzegovina (G); Costa Rica - Singapore (G&S); Costa Rica - Peru (G&S); Peru - Mexico (G&S); Colombia - El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras (G&S); Ukraine - Montenegro (G&S); United States - Oman (G&S); East African Community Common Market (S); Turkey - Mauritius (G); Australia - Malaysia (G&S); ASEAN - Australia and New Zealand (G&S); Mexico - Uruguay (G); Chile - Nicaragua (G&S); European Union - Serbia (S); China - Singapore (G&S); United States - Republic of Korea (G&S); New Zealand - the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu (G&S).

³ Documents WT/REG/W/81, WT/REG/W/84, WT/REG/W/86 and WT/REG/W/88.

4 EARLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1. Paragraph 1 of the Transparency Mechanism (TM)⁴, 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 2014, a total of five early announcements were received from Members, three for RTAs under negotiation and two for newly signed RTAs.⁵

5 SUBSEQUENT NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING

5.1. 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 2014, notifications of changes for two RTAs have been received and posted on the RTA Database.⁶

5.2. 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. The Secretariat circulated a list of RTAs subject to implementation reports as of 14 April 2014 (document WT/REG/W/82). Implementation reports were already due for 114 RTAs, and for 10 RTAs implementation ended in 2014. One end of implementation report of the EU-Chile FTA was circulated on 6 November 2014.⁷

6 DATABASE ON RTAS

6.1. 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.

7 PROCEDURES TO IMPROVE AND FACILITATE THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

7.1. No discussion was held on this item.

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

8.1. No discussion was held on this item.

9 FINAL REMARKS

9.1. During the 72nd Session, the Chairman informed Members about the recently launched e-training course on RTAs and the WTO which had been developed by the RTA Section in collaboration with the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation.

9.2. In an effort to encourage the notification of non-notified RTAs, the Chairman with the help of the Secretariat, continued to draw up and circulate in advance of CRTA meetings a list of non-notified RTAs which have been verified by their parties as being in force and appeared in factual presentations circulated between September 2009 and September 2014.⁸

⁴ 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, 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).

⁵ Under negotiation: Russian Federation/Belarus/Kazakhstan - Viet Nam; European Union - SADC; European Union - West Africa. Newly signed: EFTA - Central America; EFTA - Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁶ Canada - Chile; Mexico - Uruguay.

⁷ Document WT/REG164/R/1.

⁸ Documents WT/REG/W/80/Rev.1, WT/REG/W/83, WT/REG/W/85 and WT/REG/W/87.

9.3. In an effort to unblock the backlog in the receipt of data necessary for the preparation and drafting of factual presentations for certain RTAs, the Chairman consulted with a number of delegations who expressed a willingness to provide the missing information as soon as possible.

9.4. Although considerable progress has been made in the preparation of factual presentations, the Committee continues to experience some difficulties in adhering to its work programme. 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 2014**Seventy-second Session – 8 April 2014

WT/REG/M/72	
WT/REG330/M/1	Chile - Malaysia, goods
WT/REG335/M/1	Canada - Jordan, goods
WT/REG334/M/1	Canada - Panama, goods and services
WT/REG339/M/1	Republic of Korea - Turkey, goods
WT/REG278/M/1	Panama - Central America (Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala),
WT/REG331/M/1	goods and services
WT/REG336/M/1	
WT/REG337/M/1	European Union (28) enlargement, goods and services
WT/REG242/M/1	European Union - Bosnia and Herzegovina, goods [Non-Member]

Seventy-third Session – 23 June 2014

WT/REG/M/73	
WT/REG347/M/1	Costa Rica - Singapore, goods and services
WT/REG342/M/1	Costa Rica - Peru, goods and services
WT/REG308/M/1	Peru - Mexico, goods and services
WT/REG316/M/1	Colombia-EI Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, goods and services
WT/REG338/M/1	Ukraine - Montenegro, goods and services
WT/REG259/M/1	United States - Oman, goods and services
WT/REG346/M/1	East African Community Common Market, services
WT/REG341/M/1	Turkey - Mauritius, goods

Seventy-fourth Session – 23 September 2014

WT/REG/M/74	
WT/REG340/M/1	Australia - Malaysia, goods and services
WT/REG284/M/1	ASEAN - Australia and New Zealand, goods and services
WT/REG345/M/1	Mexico - Uruguay, goods
WT/REG344/M/1	Chile - Nicaragua, goods and services
WT/REG285/M/2	European Union - Serbia, services [Non-Member]

Seventy-fifth Session – 10-11 November 2014 (to be issued)

WT/REG/M/75	
WT/REG/W/89	Draft Report (2014) of the CRTA to the General Council
WT/REG262/M/1	China - Singapore, goods and services
WT/REG311/M/1	United States - Republic of Korea, goods and services
WT/REG348/M/1	New Zealand - the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, goods and services