



Geneva WATCH

An overview of the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade negotiations

Charles Akande, Editor

Trans-Atlantic Trade in Focus

Trans-Atlantic trade agreements have been at the center of the European political discussions as Canadian and U.S. officials visited Europe this past week (Canadians were working on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, CETA, and the Americans were discussing their Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP).

Canada's Minister for Trade, Chrystia Freeland, hailed the now finalized CETA which completed legal scrubbing on February 29th. The main negotiations were concluded back in September 2014, but the two parties have since been working on fine-tuning the agreement, particularly the controversial investment chapter.

"[W]e believe this is a great deal," Freeland told reporters on April 21st, adding that this "gold-standard agreement" is going to "set a new bar" for all future deals and be a "terrific driver for economic growth."

However, not everyone in Europe is convinced of CETA's benefits. Some members of the EU parliament continue to criticize the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provision, even after the change brought to the chapter which features an investment court system (ICS) that will help set up "a permanent, transparent, and institutionalized dispute settlement tribunal" according to European Trade Commissioner, Cecilia Malmström.

"We have achieved much strong commitment on the right of government to regulate (...) we have achieved improvements on what we have done to the process of arbitration – it is more objective and transparent," Freeland said of the new investment chapter.

The Walloon (a region of Belgium comprising over 50% of the country's area and 1/3 of its population) government's minister-president, Paul Magnette, meanwhile is still not convinced and told the Walloon Parliament on April 13th that his region will not give its green light to the Belgian federal government to ratify CETA, unless it is guaranteed that its concerns on ISDS are addressed.

"There are people who don't want trade, who want to halt globalization or even reverse it. That would not only be economically damaging, but also politically (...) let's get [trade deals] right for the 21st century," Freeland told reporters on April 21st.

The CETA's new approach for protecting investments features the same elements the Commission elaborated on at the end of last year (November 2015) and presented to the U.S. in the context of their bilateral free trade negotiations – TTIP – early this year.

The proposal has yet to draw consensus in the U.S. which has already completed an ISDS chapter in the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP). The 13th Round of TTIP negotiations is set to start on Monday, April 25th.

Visiting Europe this past week, U.S. President, Barack Obama also called for the rapid conclusion of the TTIP negotiations when meeting with leaders from Germany, France, Italy, and the UK. President Obama is pressing for the transatlantic deal to be completed before he leaves office. However, many in Europe are still disgruntled with the way the negotiations are evolving, some complaining about the protection of geographical indications (GIs) which they claim has not been properly addressed in TTIP, as it was in CETA.

Visa Issues

Canadian obligatory visas for Bulgarian and Romanian citizens was among the concerns Minister Freeland had to address this past week, as the

Romanian delegation in Brussels threatened to veto CETA if a resolution is not found on the issue. Canada offers a visa-waiver to citizens of all EU member states, except Bulgaria and Romania.

Geneva Watch is published by Dairy Farmers of Canada, Chicken Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers to report on the various events occurring in Geneva, particularly on the WTO negotiations on agriculture.

For more information or comments, please visit: dairyfarmers.ca, chickenfarmers.ca, eggfarmers.ca, turkeyfarmersofcanada.ca, chep-poic.ca

Legal Deposit: National Library of Canada, ISSN 1496-9254



Dairy Farmers
of Canada
Les Producteurs laitiers
du Canada



Chicken Farmers
of Canada
Les Producteurs de
poulet du Canada

EGG FARMERS
OF CANADA

Dedicated to Quality



LES PRODUCTEURS
D'ŒUFS DU CANADA

Dédiés à la qualité



TURKEY FARMERS
OF CANADA
LES ÉLEVEURS DE DINDON
DU CANADA

Canadian
Hatching Egg
Producers



Les Producteurs
d'œufs d'incubatio
du Canada