



Geneva WATCH

An overview of the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral trade negotiations

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Animated Discussions on CETA Ahead of October 27th EU-Canada Summit

The EU Commission is multiplying discussions on the agreement in various fora in anticipation of the October 27th EU-Canada Summit where the Comprehensive economic and trade agreement (CETA) is expected to be signed by leaders. This was the case on August 31st when the EU parliament's international trade committee had an animated discussion about CETA; with the Commission putting forward that CETA provides the best trade prospects for the EU, more than any other EU bilateral free trade agreement (FTA).

Some EU Member states highlighted the multiple benefits the EU will gain from CETA, starting with the protection of 140 geographical indication products, and the opening of Canadian public markets and cheese sector at a time when the European agricultural sector is experiencing great difficulty. If this agreement is derailed, the EU will no longer be a credible negotiator – one EU Member was quoted as saying – echoing calls for swift provisional implementation of the accord following the EU Parliament's ratification in the autumn.

Others, meanwhile, continue to question the investment chapter, asking for clarification on the new investment court system. French Member of the European Parliament, Yannick Jadot, stressed that the agreed investment chapter will provide “significant powers to Canadian companies and subsidiaries of American firms based in Canada.” France has lately criticized the U.S.-EU free trade (TTIP) asking for the negotiations to be halted. CETA, which some compare to a small TTIP, would prevent EU Member states from

implementing policies such as “Buy European” or a “European Small Business Act”.

“With the CETA we will never be able to do that,” Jadot said.

Provisional implementation of the accord is expected following the EU Parliament vote, but before ratification by each member states' parliament. This, some say, would create a *fait accompli*, since Members will be already exposed to the negative impacts of the accord long before their regional and national parliament's ratification.

Canada, for its part, has appointed former foreign and international trade minister, Pierre Pettigrew as an envoy to help convince European countries to swiftly ratify and implement CETA.

Timeline

Additional discussions on CETA are planned in September. EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström will be holding a meeting with civil society on September 19th, while an informal meeting of EU trade ministers is scheduled to take place September 22-23 in Bratislava (Slovakia).

The Bratislava informal discussion will focus on CETA and TTIP (along with a third item, “modernisation of trade defence instruments” (M-TDIs)). In the case of CETA, trade ministers are expected to continue their evaluation of the accord and discuss the signature and ratification processes. That being said, no decision is expected to be taken at that meeting as it is only an informal session. A formal meeting of trade ministers is scheduled for November 11th in Brussels – after the October 27th EU-Canada Summit – which will feature the signing of CETA.

However, this doesn't mean that EU trade ministers will not have a chance to approve CETA before its signing ceremony. In fact, the EU committee of permanent representatives – which is mostly composed of EU ambassadors – will meet on October 12th with the goal to approve CETA. This meeting will pave the way for trade ministers to approve the decision taken by ambassadors at a General Affairs

Council (GAC) scheduled for October 18th, thus allowing the signing of the accord to take place on October 27th at the EU-Canada summit.

After the signatures are dry, the EU parliament is then expected to ratify the agreement ahead of its provisional implementation.

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.

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