

From: [Art. 4.1(b)] (TRADE)
Sent: 28 June 2015 22:29
To: [Art. 4.1(b)]
Cc: [Art. 4.1(b)] (TRADE)
Subject: 2015.06.24 - Meeting with FEE (Federation of European Accountants) on TTIP MRAs

*** for registration in Ares ***

FEE: Hilde Blomme (deputy CEO), Petra Weymuller

COM: [Art. 4.1(b)]

FEE represents national associations of auditors and accountants. Auditing firms as such are not members of FEE.

- FEE membership reflects the diversity in MS: In UK, ACCA groups three professions: statutory auditors, tax advisors, accountants; in DE all three are organized separately; in FR tax advisors are lawyers; in SL there are even 6 different professions
- One of FEE's larger members, ACCA (UK), is quite interested in MRA with the US, but was twice rejected: US requests a university degree on entry, whereas in the UK ACCA can grant a license for an equivalent to bachelor degree. ACCA remains interested, "but not at all price"
- COM mentioned the gap between the US interest in an accountancy MRA as repeatedly said by USTR, and the absence of lobbying by US industry so far - except for one mtg with a representative of Deloitte, who indicated that a MRA would be useful for audit firms in terms of personnel retention.
- COM also unsure about the economic value and meaningfulness, so welcomed any input from FEE
- FEE confirmed that being recognized as statutory auditor requires heavy investment, and lack of recognition in third countries is a significant barrier that hampers mobility. The industry has a lot of mobility in the junior ranks, but from manager and upwards level one needs to be fully qualified. So MRA could be useful
- FEE could not indicate significant interest from their US counterparts so far, but was willing to check again with the industry associations NASBA, ASCAB
- FEE interested to know who would negotiate a MRA: on the US side, on the EU side. At what stage would regulators be involved, and how? Would a MRA require full automatic recognition, or limit itself to facilitating access. It needs to be kept in mind that national company law, national tax law is very different also within the EU, so asking separate aptitude tests on this is not unreasonable
- FEE did an informal survey in 2013 to test appetite for a MRA with the US, and then results were rather positive. However not all of their members replied then; probably due to resources constraints and also general lack of knowledge on MRAs of

FTAs - so a future survey would have to ask simple questions. It would also be important for FEE to better know how an MRA would work and what it would cover

- FEE also mentioned the Ireland - US MRA on accountants - but both COM and FEE were unsure about the exact coverage and would check again

Follow-up:

- FEE to sound out informally NASBA and AICPA
- COM to debrief FEE after July TTIP round
- FEE to ask its General Assembly in September on appetite to consider a MRA under TTIP.
COM to help in preparing a short non paper to frame the discussion (end July)

[Art. 4.1(b)]