

The first plenary meeting of the WTO e-commerce negotiations took place on 19 May, after a break of three months. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair (JP Ambassador) underlined that it was an information session, followed by webinars, therefore they did not foresee exchange of views.

Nonetheless, CA, US, EU, UK, AUS, NZ, JP and KR made statements against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, calling on RU to end the aggression. RU rejected these claims and expressed their regret that the eJSI was used by Members to advance unfounded accusations. UA spoke about the humanitarian and economic consequences of the war and thanked those Members who expressed their solidarity.

While there have been no small group meetings since February, there were short reports on intersessional consultations on open internet access by CH, on electronic transactions framework by the UK and on cybersecurity by ECU. Unsurprisingly, the reports did not indicate any progress.

The Chair announced the restart of the work in the small groups, including the launch of small groups on privacy and on telecommunications services. Art.4(1)(a) 3rd indent

In addition, the Chair noted that four years had passed since the launch of the JSI and there were still a lot of text proposals on the table that did not gather support. He underlined that the onus is on the proponents to push forward their proposals; and suggested a stock-taking meeting to be organised in July to discuss the state of play. In the margins of MC12, the co-conveners will issue a short statement underlining the importance of the eJSI and confirming their ambition to reach substantial convergence on most issues by end-2022.

The webinars addressed two issues:

#### I. Life Science Perspectives: Cross-Border Data Transfers – Challenges and Opportunities

Art.4(1)(b) (Biotechnology Innovation Organization), Art.4(1)(b) (Global Blood Therapeutics), Art.4(1)(b) (Amgen) and Art.4(1)(b) (Roche) made a very strong case on the importance of cross-border data transfer for R&D, biotech research, clinical trials and healthcare in general.

#### II. Source Code

Art.4(1)(b) (Google) and Art.4(1)(b) (Sidley) gave insightful presentations on the importance and evolution of source code and AI.