Meeting with
Médecins Sans Frontières, Health Action International, Human Rights Watch
03/06/2021
-----
MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting:

The Commission met representatives from three non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - Médecins Sans Frontières, Health Action International, Human Rights Watch – as regards the ongoing discussions in the WTO on the proposed waiver of the TRIPS Agreement in relation to COVID-related technologies. The NGOs indicated that they have been following the developments on the intellectual property (IP) discussion and fully back the calls of India/South Africa and others to agree on a waiver of the TRIPS Agreement. They highlighted that this is widely supported by numerous civil society organizations, governments, parliaments and the global community in general.

The Commission noted that the EU has been very engaged in the COVID crisis response and will submit a comprehensive proposal to the WTO for an urgent trade response to ensure equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines and treatments, including on IP issues.

The NGOs underlined that there is already capacity of production of vaccines in developing countries and this has not been used since the voluntary agreements are completely dependent on vaccine developers. The supply of vaccines needs to be diversified globally. They consider that there is plenty of evidence that IP is a barrier which prevents those companies from producing vaccines, e.g. in Bangladesh. Even if Bangladesh is not subject to the obligations of the TRIPS Agreement, broad global support is needed to bring the vaccine production there. A broad waiver of the TRIPS agreement is the only way forward since global response is needed. NGOs noted that the compulsory licensing is not functioning properly, including in the EU. They pointed to the various materials already prepared on these issues.

Topics: Trade in relation to COVID-related technologies
TRN:
Médecins Sans Frontières International - 928308827208-10
Health Action International (HAI) - 44361352681-84
Human Rights Watch - 56362448807-46

Invitation: Ares(2021)3812595

Participants:
Art.4.1(b) MSF Access Campaign, EU Advisor,
MSF Access Campaign, Senior legal advisor
Senior Policy Advisor EU Projects
HRW, EU Advocacy Officer
HRW
BOESHERTZ Caroline (CAB-DOMBROVSKIS)
RUEDA CATRY Cristina (CAB-DOMBROVSKIS)
(TRADE)