

REPORT

Meeting Maria Åsenius at the International Relations Committee of BusinessEurope 29 January 2016, 14:00-15:30 at BusinessEurope

Summary

Chairman Niklas Bergström introduced the meeting presenting the main topics of discussion.

Maria Åsenius provided an update on trade topics as requested by BusinessEurope: TTIP; China; India; Ukraine/Russia; WTO after the Nairobi Ministerial.

Subsequently, participants raised questions on the Safe-Harbour Court ruling, TTIP: sustainability chapter – regulatory cooperation on services - Energy and raw materials – Buy American Act - RoO; EU-Japan negotiations; MES China; WTO and the remaining issues from the Doha round; TiSA; Environmental Goods Agreement; customs problems in Ukraine; CETA and Mercosur.

Maria Åsenius' 30 minutes intervention was followed by an hour of questions

The Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC) congratulated the Commission on the outcome of the **Nairobi Ministerial Conference**, urged the Commission not to succumb to the temptation to head for a "TTIP light" and enquired about the status of the **Safe-Harbour Court ruling**. Maria Åsenius underlined that "TTIP light" would indeed be a big mistake. A Safe-Harbour agreement might be reached by early February 2016. The chairman asked about **TTIP's sustainability chapter**. Maria Åsenius answered that it had not yet been tabled with the US. BDI wanted to know how to pursue the **Doha agenda and NAMA** in particular and asked about the Commission's strategy on **Conflict Minerals**. Maria Åsenius answered that the Commission had an open mind about WTO/NAMA. As to Conflict Minerals the Commission acted as mediator in the trilogue.

European Services Forum (ESF) wondered about **regulatory cooperation on services in TTIP**, the progress of **TiSA** and **EU-Japan negotiations**. Maria Åsenius clarified that TTIP was a living agreement. TiSA was currently negotiated by certain WTO members. For EU-Japan negotiations, 2016 was a crucial year and the ball would be in Japan's court now. Eurocoton made a remark on US's flexibility regarding **Buy American** in order to strengthen EU's competitiveness. Maria Åsenius agreed on this point. CEFIC evoked a possible avenue as regards **TTIP's chapter in energy and raw materials**, which could be investments in bioethanol, where EU is facing 60% import duties. Maria Åsenius thanked CEFIC for the information.

CONFINDUSTRIA raised the **MES China** issue: many jobs in the EU were at risk and asked about the timing for a consultation and TDI modernisation. Maria Åsenius said that the Commission would go through in a thorough impact assessment. A stakeholder event is scheduled for mid-March 2016. The European Parliament and Member States will have their say in the codecision procedure. CATERPILLAR asked about the **Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA)**. Maria Åsenius explained that the momentum was lost. ACEA underlined the importance to head for a substantial **TTIP** agreement. OMV enquired about the EU's approach regarding improved relations with **Russia**. Maria Åsenius said that the EU would start addressing trade irritants with Russia. DAIMLER EU wondered about EU's trade relations with **Iran**. Maria Åsenius remarked that most importantly Iran should join WTO first.

TUSIAD enquired about the RoO applicable to EU exports to the US which would incorporate **Turkish imports**. Would a cumulation be allowed? Maria Åsenius answered to follow this question up with Commission services.

EURATEX pointed to customs problems its companies were encountering in the **Ukraine**. Maria Åsenius took note of the issue. BASF wondered about **CETA** and whether it would be a mixed agreement. Maria Åsenius answered that it would be for the Court to decide. Luisa SANTOS enquired about the status of the **EU-Mercosur negotiations**. Maria Åsenius answered that internal consultations were on-going.

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