



Minutes of the ECR Meeting of December 6th, 2011

Attendance: All except Cyprus, Finland, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania

1. CETA up-date

- Report on the CETA hearings in the Standing Committee on International Trade

EUDEL informed that the Standing Committee on International Trade of the House of Commons has conducted a number of hearings on the CETA negotiations during the months of October and November. The full text (transcript) of the debates with the various stakeholders invited by the Committee is available on line at the following link.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/CommitteeBusiness/CommitteeMeetings.aspx?Cmte=CIIT&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1>

EUDEL underlined that in general the debates were fairly predictable. While most business representatives and economic analysts have expressed clear support to CETA, a more critical view has been expressed by the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, especially in respect of public procurement at sub-federal level and of investor-state provisions. On supply-management, while a good number of witnesses have called for a profound reform of the system, the Conservative majority and the entire opposition alike have claimed that supply-management must be preserved. On the political side, the Conservative members of the Committee expressed an almost enthusiastic support for the negotiations while NDP and Liberals have questioned the economic benefits of CETA and openly criticised the government for the "secretive" way in which negotiations are conducted.

As a complement to its study of the CETA negotiations, the Standing Committee is on mission in Europe (Brussels and Paris) the week of December 3rd.

- Minister Fast at a EU-Canada Conference in Vancouver

On November 28th, Minister Fast participated at a Conference on EU/Canada trade relationship organised in Vancouver by the Italian Chamber of Commerce. EUDEL also attended. In his speech, Min. Fast conveyed the usual positive and optimistic message on CETA and reiterated the Canadian intention to conclude negotiations by mid-2012. He also said that the official opposition, NDP, will be prejudicially against CETA. On oil sands he said that the current EU proposals are discriminatory against Canada and, if adopted, Canada will make recourse to international remedies. However, he did not establish any direct linkage between oil sands and CETA.

- Minister Fast at the EU HoMs lunch

Minister Fast was guest at the EU HoMs lunch on November 29th. On this occasion, he provided the usual positive message on CETA and underlined the following: US market still central to Canadian economy but in relative decline; CETA is number one priority but Canada will negotiate other free trade agreements; importance to avoid that other issues (irritants) delay or impede the finalisation of the CETA negotiations; question of visa free travel for certain EU MS is important – hope to reach a solution before the CETA ratification.

[DELETED]

- CETA process

On the CETA process, EUDEL informed that the Canadian Chief Negotiator is in Brussels this week and that a focused working session of the negotiations will take place in Ottawa the week of January 30th. EUDEL will contact the Canadian Chief negotiator to see whether he is available to make a state of play with EU MS either before the end of the year or at the beginning of January.

Regarding Austria's concern about the mutual recognition of standards (e.g. for biomass boilers), EUDEL said that CETA would not directly address this type of problem, but rather, under the Regulatory Cooperation chapter of CETA, the Regulatory Cooperation Framework, under which this type problem could be addressed, would be enhanced.

2. Fuel Quality Directive

EUDEL informed that a meeting of the Fuel Quality Directive technical committee took place in Brussels on December 2nd. As no decision was taken on the implementing measures a new meeting has been convened on January 19th, 2012. In addition, the Environment Council of December 19th will address the draft implementing measures under "any other business".

3. Debriefing

- TISC meeting of December 1st, 2011

EUDEL distributed a copy of the final agenda of this meeting, which consisted of a face-to-face meeting in Brussels followed by a videoconference. The EU side was led by Philipp Dupuis (DG Trade) while the Canadian side was led by Kathleen MacKay (DFAIT). EUDEL gave a short debrief on the main results.

- Meeting of JMC Veterinary Committee – November 16-17, 2011

EUDEL distributed a copy of the agreed list of Action Items resulting from this meeting. EUDEL noted that a number of MS (PL, DK, F, UK, SE and IT) also participated at the meeting.

4. Other business

- Establishment of a EU/US Working Group on Growth and Jobs

EUDEL informed that, further to the EU/US summit held on November 28th, the EU and the US have agreed to establish a High-Level Working Group (WG) on Jobs and Growth. The WG is tasked to identify policies and measures to increase US/EU trade and investment to support mutually beneficial job creation, economic growth and international competitiveness. As a result, the WG will recommend the practical means necessary to implement any policy measures identified. This could also include the negotiation of one or more bilateral trade agreements. It is important to underline that, at this stage, all options remain open and one cannot jump to the conclusion that an EU/US FTA will be negotiated. What is really feasible needs to be established by the group. The preliminary works of the group should be completed by June 2012.

- Demarche at DFAIT for the preparation of the 8th WTO Ministerial Conference

EUDEL informed that, at the request of DG Trade, the EU Delegation will conduct a demarche with DFAIT in view of the 8th Ministerial Conference. EUDEL will debrief MS after the demarche.

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- List of ECR meetings in 2012

EUDEL circulated a tentative list of ECR meetings in 2012. Some MS noted that the meeting on May 1st would coincide with a day of national holidays in several MS. EUDEL will review the draft calendar.

EUDEL noted that Croatia will have observer status at future ECR meetings after the signing of its Accession Treaty on 9 December 2011.

- End of the semester of Polish Presidency – written point

EUDEL expresses appreciation to the Polish Presidency for the work done, which is coming to an end.

PL also thanks the EUDEL for excellent cooperation and would like to underline that the Presidency was held during difficult, but important times for Europe and hopes that the work undertaken by the Polish government will have positive results. PL also said that at various meetings and during presentations the Presidency tried to show another picture of the EU, different from the one presented recently by media in Canada. PL also would like to thank the EU Delegation and the EU Member States for participating in the cultural and social events it organised in Ottawa.

Finally, PL wishes the incoming Danish Presidency all the best in fulfilling their responsibilities.

5. Guest Speaker

Mr. Hendrik Brakel, Senior Economist of Export Development Canada made a presentation on "*Canada in a challenging economic environment*". Please, see attached power point presentation.

6. Next ECR meeting

The next ECR meeting will take place on 10 January 2012.