

Anders Halvorsen

Fra: Anders Halvorsen
Sendt: Thursday, April 23, 2015 9:58 PM
Til: 'Shivendra Singh (NASSCOM)'; 'tim.conway@c-metrics.com'
Kopi: Jim Poisant
Emne: International Trade WG call summary for review

Viktighet: Høy

Dear Shivendra,

Thank you very much for chairing the International Trade Working Group today. As discussed, please find below a draft call summary below. Kindly let me know if you have any edits before I circulate to the group. By way of transparency, I am also planning on Cc'ing the other working group members.

Thanks and regards,
Anders

WITSA Working Group on International Trade – Thursday, April 23, 2015

Attendees:

Mr. Shivendra Singh, NASSCOM (India) – Chair
Mr. Tim Conway, AIIA (Australia)
Dr. Silvia Bidart, CESSI (Argentina)
Dr. Kasitorn Pooparadai, ATCI (Thailand)
Dr. Makoto Yokozawa, JISA (Japan)
Ms. Junko Kawauchi, JISA (Japan)
Dr. Jim Poisant, WITSA
Mr. Anders Halvorsen, WITSA

Call Summary:

Shivendra welcomed everyone and explained the objectives of the call. He referenced the working group template which had been circulated by Anders Halvorsen, and which included a draft timeline. Once an assessment of issues and background had been made, draft principles drafted and key stakeholders identified, a paper would be drafted by the working group, which, once finalized, would be presented to the Global Policy Action Committee for review and then to the Board of Directors for approval.

It was noted that WITSA had published a Statement of Policy on International Trade in ICT Goods and Services in September 2013 (ref.

http://www.witsa.org/saopaulo2013/WITSA_Statement_of_Policy_on_International_Trade_Sept2013.pdf). This paper, which had been drafted by Tim Conway, addressed the importance of multilateral trade agreements, identified shortcomings, took a critical view of bilateral and regional trade initiatives (as they are, by definition, exclusionary) and established a set of global trade principles. It would be the objective of this working group to review WITSA's existing principles and consider (a) updates to these and (b) any other trade concerns not covered by the 2013 paper.

Shivendra asked the participants to identify top issues that should be covered by the working group. Tim suggested that, while the 2013 WITSA paper had taken an "anti-balkanization" approach to trade, the current landscape was dominated

by bilateral and regional trade initiatives, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) - a trade agreement to be negotiated between the European Union and the United States - and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) - a proposed regional regulatory and investment treaty. WITSA should therefore consider developing policy principles which reflect today's actual trade environment. Tim noted that the WTO Doha Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations was dead and the effort to negotiate a separate WTO Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) had stalled (though an expansion of the plurilateral Information Technology Agreement (ITA) on the abolishment of tariffs on IT products was still on the table). Another area that WITSA should consider is cross-border data flows and international trade. Despite the growing significance of the Internet for international trade, governments are restricting the Internet in ways that reduce the ability of businesses and entrepreneurs to use the Internet as a place for international commerce and limits the access of consumers to goods and services. WITSA should discuss the importance of the Internet and cross-border data flows for international trade and propose steps that governments should take to apply existing international trade rules and norms and identify where new trade rules are required to further support the Internet and cross-border data flows as drivers of international commerce and trade.

Professor Yokozawa stressed that any policy principles developed by WITSA should be global in nature. Nevertheless, WITSA should consider how to deal with the key regional agreements currently being negotiated. Dr. Yokozawa also agreed that the free flow of information across borders was a top priority but added that efforts must be made to avoid duplication with the work currently being undertaken by other WITSA working groups; notably the Working Group on Restrictions of the free flow of information across nationality/regional borders and the Working Group on Security, Privacy and Data Protection.

Dr. Kasitorn encouraged the working group to consider trade barriers related to the digital content industry.

Dr. Bidart mentioned the negative effects of double taxation in many countries around the world, and the taxation of imports of information services. This is an important issue. It is also one that will have additional conflicts arising through, for example, the OECD work on global taxation. WITSA should consider how best to address this from a global industry perspective as well.

The following actions were agreed on the call:

Action: Working Group members will review the WITSA 2013 paper and identify where the gaps are; what needs to be updated. An assessment of ongoing trade initiatives in all regions should be made.

Action: Members will circulate research that identifies trade barriers of concern. Members should take care to look at issues not exclusively from a top-down angle, but consider how businesses, notably SMEs, are affected by emerging barriers (bottom-up approach).

Action: Anders to keep a repository of all data circulated

Next steps

Members will assess the material circulated and reconvene for another call at 8:00am EDT on May 7th.