

Trade Policy Unit

Daily news and updates

(1) E-commerce talks resume following summer break, Mauritius joins the initiative (WTO)

- The latest cluster of meetings tackled several topics, including implementation periods for a future agreement on e-commerce, in particular for developing and least developed countries, access to online platforms and competition in electronic commerce.
- The negotiators continued to seek convergence on topics such as cyber security, privacy, telecommunications services, electronic invoicing and electronic transaction frameworks. Two more clusters of meetings will take place in October and November, with co-convenors aiming to issue a more streamlined negotiating text towards the end of this year.
- Participants in the negotiations on e-commerce continued to seek convergence on various topics in the negotiations during their 12-15 September meetings.
- The co-convenors of the negotiations — Australia, Japan and Singapore — welcomed Mauritius as a new participant, bringing the total number of WTO members participating in the e-commerce initiative to 87.

(2) Africa: Intra-regional trade is under computed due to econometric and methodological errors (Brookings) (Ecofin)

- The overall contribution of intraregional trades to Africa's exports is far higher than estimates because of "econometric and methodological errors," U.S. think tank Brookings indicates in a recent working paper. According to the paper, intraregional trade accounts for 22 to 25% of the continent's overall exports, well above the 16% announced by several studies.
- In the working paper titled "The economic significance of intra-African trade: Getting the narrative right," Brookings notably considered the usually high informal cross-border trades on the continent. "While informal cross-border trade is a global phenomenon, studies tend to concur that it is much more widespread on the African continent than in other regions.
- The high prevalence of informal cross-border trade -which is by definition intra-regional since it concerns exclusively goods traded by neighboring countries- is mainly noticeable in small landlocked countries and some subregions of the continent.

(3) G-7 trade ministers pledge to boost supply chain resiliency (Kyodo News Plus)

- Trade ministers from the Group of Seven advanced economies agreed Thursday to bolster supply chain resiliency for vital products, including critical minerals, amid Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine. The ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, plus the European Union, said in a statement after their meeting in Germany that recent crises have drawn attention to "systemic vulnerabilities to chronic risks and acute supply chains shocks" that hamper economic growth and security.
- "We, the G-7 Trade Ministers, underline that diversifying trade and expanding trading relations on a mutually beneficial basis is key to ensuring well-functioning supply chains and to improving the resilience and sustainability of our economies."
- Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura told reporters after the meeting that strengthening supply chain resiliency needs the involvement of emerging and developing economies, suggesting it will be necessary to expand cooperation beyond the existing G-7 framework.
- Meanwhile, the ministers expressed concerns over some trade practices such as intellectual property theft, market-distorting actions of state-owned enterprises, and harmful industrial subsidies, among others.

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