

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Information Technology Agreement expansion negotiations approach the finish line. International negotiators in Geneva one step away from concluding a new Information Technology Agreement

BRUSSELS, Monday 24 June 2013. The expansion of the Information Technology Agreement has entered its final stage, as the negotiators gather in Geneva today for the penultimate round of talks. The list of products considered for expansion was consolidated last week and expectations are high that this agreement will be concluded soon.

It is really encouraging to see the expansion of the Information Technology Agreement approach these final steps. The digital technology industry hopes for swift finalisation of the talks to open up key markets for ICT products. That has a potential to kick-start the European and global economy” comments John Higgins, Director General of DIGITALEUROPE.

There is broad consensus from global ICT players that the update of the agreement is needed now. Despite the tremendous developments in technology, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has not updated its list of duty free products since the ITA’s birth in 1996. As a result, many new ICT products are not covered by the ITA regime, creating uncertainty in the market. The momentum achieved in Geneva must be seized and the agreement concluded by mid-2013.

As the WTO moves towards the Ministerial Conference planned for December in Bali, timely finalisation of the new ITA, a flagship multilateral agreement substantially liberalising trade, will send the right signal and restore trust in the multilateral trading system. It is worth the final effort; the positive rippling effects of an expanded ITA will be felt from Europe to the United States, from China to emerging markets, and will deliver positive benefits to consumers.

In this light, John Higgins comments: ‘An expanded ITA can bring major opportunities such as: competitive prices, productivity, growth and new jobs. These are really worthwhile benefits that we can all enjoy through increased global trade in digital products.’

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