

ACCESSION OF LITHUANIA

Communication from Lithuania

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania has submitted the following information on Lithuania's progress in legislation required for the accession to the WTO (second half of 1998 – 1 March 1999).

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- New Law on Competition No. VIII-1064 was adopted by the Parliament on 11 February 1999 and contains WTO TRIPS-consistent additional provisions on intellectual property.
 - In December 1998, Lithuania ratified the Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations. In accordance with Government Resolution No.219 of 26 February 1999, the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Producers of Phonograms against Non-Authorized Duplication of their Programmes have been transmitted to Parliament for ratification. Ratification is foreseen in April-May 1999.
 - The draft Law on Copyrights and Related Rights is under final consideration in Parliament and will be adopted in March-April 1999.
 - In the second-half of 1998, the Government of Lithuania established a special Intellectual Property Rights section at the Ministry of the Interior.
 - The draft Law on Standardization to be presented for Government consideration shortly.
 - Law on Conformity Assessment was approved in October 1998.
 - The preferential excise tax treatment of small breweries, as a transitional measure, will be abolished by 1 January 2000 by the Amendment to the Law on Excise Taxes No. VIII-982 of 21 December 1998.
 - The Government has decided that the new Order of Customs Valuation, which fully conforms to WTO provisions, would enter into force on 1 January 2000. Respective documents are to be adopted by the Government in March 1999. The minimum import prices and "prices-in-checking" are to be eliminated by 1 January 2000.
 - The ban on the importation of mead containing alcoholic beverages with alcohol content of more than 50 percent was abolished on 10 December 1998 as an Amendment of the Law of Alcohol Control.

- Lithuania is preparing the Notification on State Trading Issues regarding the exclusive right for the production of products with ethyl alcohol strength exceeding 22 percent.
 - The annual stamp taxes for activity licensing, related to importation and domestic trade on alcohol and alcoholic beverages, were equalized in June 1998 by the Governmental Resolution No. 774.
 - The annual stamp taxes for activity licensing, related to the importation and domestic trade on petroleum, is to be equalized by the Governmental Resolution in March 1999.
 - The commitments concerning sanitary and phytosanitary measures, foreseen in document WT/ACC/LTU/22 of 14 May 1998, have been practically fulfilled and the remaining issues in the SPS area are not essential. The updated document on SPS measures in Lithuania, already submitted to the WTO Secretariat, reflects the latest developments in this area.
 - The following Inquiry Points have been established and already notified to the WTO Secretariat: SPS Inquiry Point, TBT Inquiry Point, Inquiry Point on Services, Inquiry Point on TRIPS.
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