
Committee on Import Licensing

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 APRIL 1998

Chairman: Mr. Tomasz Jodko (Poland)

The Committee on Import Licensing held its seventh meeting on 24 April 1998. The agenda proposed for the meeting, contained in WTO/AIR/818, was adopted as follows:

	<u>Page</u>
1. <u>Notifications:</u>	
(i) Notifications under Articles 1.4(a) and/or 8.2 (b) (publications and/or legislation)	1
(ii) Notifications under Article 7.3 (Replies to Questionnaire on Import Licensing Procedures).....	2
(iii) Notifications under Article 5 (New import licensing procedures or changes).....	3
2. Other business.....	3
3. Election of officers.....	3

1. Notifications

(i) Notifications under Articles 1.4(a) and/or 8.2(b) (Publications and/or Legislation)

1.1 The Chairman said that since the last meeting, the Secretariat had received notifications under Articles 1.4(a) and/or 8.2(b) from Argentina; European Communities; Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Korea; Madagascar; Niger; Nigeria; Norway and Qatar. These notifications were circulated in the G/LIC/N/1/- series. Copies of publications and laws and regulations referred to in the notifications were available for consultation in the Secretariat. In addition, the Secretariat had also received four more notifications from Brazil; Hong Kong, China; Korea and the Philippines, which would be subject to review at the next meeting. He noted that out of a Membership of 132, only 51 Members (European Communities and Member States counted as one) had thus far submitted notifications relating to publications or laws and regulations. The remaining 66 Members had not made notifications under this provision since the entry into force of the WTO Agreement. He requested Members that had not yet provided any information concerning the laws and regulations and publications relevant to import licensing to submit their notifications without further delay.

1.2 The representative of Hungary informed the Committee that, as from 1 January 1998, the Hungarian Government had introduced a major liberalization package and removed a large number of items from the list of products subject to import licensing as contained in the Hungarian notification submitted under Articles 1.4(a), 5 and 7.3 of the Agreement. As part of this liberalization package,

Hungary had introduced an early implementation of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing and liberalized all imports of textiles and clothing products from all WTO Members. Furthermore, import liberalization covered several non-textile products, ranging from leather and fur products to chemicals, telecommunication equipment and passenger cars. As indicated in the notification, other aspects of the Hungarian import regime remained unchanged. He believed that the significant import liberalization implemented by Hungary would contribute to multilateral trade liberalization.

1.3 The representative of Poland informed the Committee that the legislative work which had been undertaken by her authorities to bring the Polish laws on foreign trade into conformity with the WTO rules had been completed. The new laws had been passed by the Parliament and had entered into force as from 1 January 1998. Of the new laws, the law on the administration of foreign trade in goods and services, which constituted the legal basis for licensing in Poland, had been published in the Polish Official Journal and was currently being translated into English. This Law would be notified to the Committee as soon as the translation was completed.

1.4 The Committee took note of the notifications and statements.

(ii) Notifications under Article 7.3 (Replies to Questionnaire on Import Licensing Procedures)

1.5 The Chairman informed the Committee that since the last meeting, the following 16 Members had submitted replies to the Questionnaire: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Gambia, Haiti, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Qatar and Singapore. The relevant notifications had been circulated in the G/LIC/N/3/- series. In addition to the notifications listed in the Airgram, the Committee had also received three notifications from Brazil, Korea and the Philippines. These three notifications, as well as the notification from Bolivia listed in the Airgram which had so far been circulated only in Spanish, would be subject to review at the next meeting. The Chairman said that despite the annual deadline of 30 September to submit replies to the Questionnaire, only a total of 50 Members (EC and Member States counted as one) had submitted notifications since the WTO Agreement entered into force. He expressed concern that the number of Members that had not complied with this notification requirement remained high and urged Members that had not yet submitted replies to the Questionnaire to do so without further delay.

1.6 The representative of Switzerland, referring to reply 9 of Sections I and II of the notification from Argentina, which stated that the fees depended on the goods concerned, questioned on what basis the fees were calculated. He further wished to know the difference between Section VII, entitled Narcotic Drugs, Intermediate Products and Psychotropic Substances, and Section XI, entitled Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

1.7 The representative of Argentina took note of the queries and undertook to provide the necessary clarification after checking with his authorities.

1.8 The representative of Poland informed the Committee that the updated notification, which would reflect the new legal basis for licensing in Poland as well as the changes made to the list of products subject to licensing effective this year, would be submitted to the Secretariat within a few days.

1.9 The representative of Japan said that answers to the questions¹ posed by New Zealand concerning the Japanese notification circulated in document G/LIC/N/3/JPN/1 had been received from his authorities in the Japanese language and that the answers in English would be provided to the delegation concerned with a copy to the Secretariat within a few days.

¹Circulated in document G/LIC/Q/JPN/1.

1.10 The representative of Japan, referring to the Export and Import Policy of India for the period 1 April 1997 to 31 March 2002 notified in document G/LIC/N/1/IND/1/Rev.1, said that as India had many licensing systems it was difficult to understand the purpose and the relationship of each system. Furthermore, according to the information available to Japan, India had announced the introduction of a new auto policy in December 1997. India had not yet responded to the questions posed by his delegation concerning this auto policy at the meeting of the Committee on Trade-Related Investment Measures on 16 March 1998. Japan believed that the policy, which introduced a local-content requirement for investors, violated the WTO provisions. In order to ensure transparency of the import licensing perspective of this policy, his delegation wished to pose the same questions in this Committee². His delegation would submit the relevant questions to India in writing with a copy to the Secretariat and wished to receive the replies to them also in writing.

1.11 The representative of India said that the questions would be forwarded to his authorities.

1.12 The Committee took note of the notifications and statements.

(iii) Notifications under Article 5 (institution of new import licensing procedures or changes)

1.13 The Committee took note of the notifications submitted by Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Nigeria and Papua New Guinea circulated in the G/LIC/N/2/- series.

2. Other business

Date of next meeting

2.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 6 October 1998.

3. Election of officers

3.1 The Committee elected Mrs. Marie Gosset (Côte d'Ivoire) as Chairperson of the Committee by acclamation, to hold office until the end of the first meeting in 1999, under Rule 12 of the Committee's Rules of Procedure (G/L/147).

3.2 The Committee elected Mr. Marshall Couper (New Zealand) as Vice-Chairperson.

²Circulated in document G/LIC/Q/IND/4.