

## Working Party on Professional Services

### NOTE ON THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 1998

#### Note by the Secretariat

1. The Working Party on Professional Services held its twenty-second meeting on 22 October 1998. The agenda for the meeting was contained in airgram WTO/AIR/938. The main item on the agenda was the Chairman's Note on the legal form of the disciplines on accountancy. Also discussed were a revised Chairman's Note on Articles XVI and XVII related issues, as well as a draft outline for the report of the WPPS's work on accountancy to the Council for Trade in Services.

#### Work Pursuant to Paragraph 2(a) of the *Decision on Professional Services*

2. The Chairman introduced his revised informal Note, "Discussion of Matters Relating to Articles XVI and XVII of the GATS in Connection with the Disciplines on Domestic Regulation in the Accountancy Sector" (Job No. 5368, 7 October 1998). He stated that the Note would not form part of the accountancy disciplines, but would instead be attached to the report of the WPPS to the Council for Trade in Services. Members accepted the revised Note following a brief discussion, during which the representative of the European Communities said that the WPPS report to the Council should be entitled "report" rather than "recommendations" as in the current draft outline.

3. Discussion of the Chairman's Note, "Legal Form of the Disciplines on Accountancy" (Job No. 5362, 7 October 1998) was held in informal mode, during which most Members supported adoption of the draft Council Decision, with amendments. The representative of Korea stated that, as there was no formal guarantee of universal adoption of the disciplines by Members, there needed to be a common provision to be inscribed in Members' Schedules together with the disciplines, allowing Members who had adopted the disciplines in the form of a reference paper to modify or withdraw the disciplines from their Schedules without compensation in the event the disciplines were not universally integrated into the GATS. Korea, however, would not block consensus on this issue. The representative then asked that his comments be included as part of the formal record of the meeting. The Chairman concluded discussions by noting that a general consensus was emerging on changes to several paragraphs, but differences existed on some key points. Members then accepted the Chairman's suggestion to holding informal consultations in an effort to reach agreement on the text of a Council Decision.

4. The Chairman's Note on the outline for the report of the WPPS to the Council for Trade in Services was also discussed in informal mode. The outline was approved by Members, with some modifications, and the Secretariat was asked to prepare a draft version of the full report.

5. Under "Other Business", Members also agreed to have the Secretariat prepare a draft version of the annual WPPS report to the Council in time for the next WPPS meeting.

6. Members decided to hold the next WPPS meeting on 16 November 1998.

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