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*The International Practice of the  
European Communities:  
Current Survey*

*International Trade  
Developments,  
Including Commercial Defence  
Actions XV:  
1 July 1998–31 December  
1998*

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This summary provides a brief overview of our report on international trade developments covering the period 1 July 1998 to 31 December 1998.

At the international level, the Ottawa Conference on electronic commerce, organized under the auspices of the OECD, was an important development in the second semester of 1998. OECD ministers discussed how to increase consumers' confidence in the digital marketplace. In this regard, they agreed that it is necessary to create and implement trustworthy technologies and policies. They also agreed that the growth of electronic commerce relies on universal and affordable access to the information infrastructure. Effective competition in telecommunication markets can ensure a sustained, long-term trend towards lower costs, increased quality, and, consequently, expanded access to information structures and services. The OECD ministers adopted three declarations on the protection of privacy in global networks; consumer protection in the context of electronic commerce; and, authentication for electronic commerce.

The negotiations on the Information Technology Agreement-2 did not finish with

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an agreement. In the meeting of the Committee of Participants on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology products of 11 December 1998 India and Malaysia opposed the proposal. Negotiations will be resumed in February 1999 to try to reach a final agreement on the scope of the ITA-2.

At EC level, the situation of the enlargement negotiations and the 'Transatlantic Economic Partnership' agreed with the US are the most important multilateral developments. With regard to enlargement, negotiations with Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Cyprus and Slovenia were formally opened in November 1998. The screening process continued with both first- and second-wave applicants. Following the change of the Maltese Government, Malta formally reactivated its membership application. In a separate development, the EC and the US agreed on an Action plan aimed at lowering the existing bilateral barriers to trade in goods. This plan replaces the so-called 'new transatlantic marketplace'.<sup>1</sup>

A new GSP Regulation came into force on 1 January 1999 and will apply until 31 December 2001. It covers both industrial and agricultural products. Notably, the graduation mechanism has not been updated since the last economic data available to the Commission cover 1997 and does not fully take into account the consequences of the economic crisis that has affected several beneficiary countries since that year. In the meantime, the graduation provided for in the old agricultural GSP Regulation has been completed.

The EC institutions published 56 anti-dumping determinations in the period under reference: photo albums in bookbound form from China (impending expiry), bicycles from China (notice updating the list of parties under examination), potassium permanganate from India and Ukraine (definitive), bed linen from Egypt, India and Pakistan (amendment), stainless steel bars from India (amendment), thiorurea dioxide from China (termination), woven glass fibre fabric from Taiwan (termination), ethanolamine from the US (impending expiry), steel stranded ropes and cables from Hungary, Mexico and Poland (initiation), hardboard from Brazil, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia (provisional; undertakings), glyphosate from China (absorption review), salmon from Norway (amendment; provisional), bicycles from Taiwan (provisional), polyester textured yarn from India and Korea (initiation), 3.5" microdisks from Indonesia (definitive), polyester textured yarn from Indonesia (amendment), large aluminium electrolytic capacitors from the US and Thailand (provisional), fluospar from China (impending expiry), bicycles from China (expiry review), bicycles from Taiwan (corrigendum), salmon from Norway (amendment), stainless steel plates from Slovenia and South Africa (initiation), polysulphide polymers from the US (definitive), potassium chloride from Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine (impending expiry), binder and baler twine from Brazil (expiry), salmon from Norway (amendment; definitive), monosodium glutamate from Brazil, Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan, US and Indonesia (definitive: Brazil, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam; termination: Indonesia and the US), salmon from Norway (amendment; definitive),

<sup>1</sup> For more information on this issue, we refer to the discussion in section III.F of our survey covering the period 1 July 1997–30 June 1998.

bicycles from China (lifting of suspension of anti-circumvention duty), isobutanol from Russia (impending expiry), flat wooden pallets from Poland (amendment), flat wooden pallets from Poland (undertakings), low-carbon ferro-chrome from Russia and Kazakhstan (expiry review), binder or baler twine from Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Saudi Arabia (provisional; undertakings Hungary), 3.5" microdisks from Indonesia (newcomer review), synthetic fibre ropes from Korea (termination), silicon carbide from China, Poland, Russia and Ukraine (impending expiry), 3.5" microdisks from Japan, Taiwan and China (expiry review), retail electronic weighing scales from Singapore (expiry review), retail electronic weighing scales from Korea (expiry), television camera systems from Japan (impending expiry), leather handbags from China (amendment), unwrought unalloyed magnesium from China (definitive), low-carbon ferro-chrome from Ukraine (expiry), seamless pipes and tubes from Croatia and Ukraine (initiation), ammonium nitrate from Lithuania (impending expiry), bicycles from China (exemption from anti-circumvention duty), colour televisions from Malaysia, Korea, China, Singapore and Thailand (amendment), ferro-silicon from Brazil, China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and Venezuela (expiry review), binder or baler twine from Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Saudi Arabia (amendment of provisional; undertakings Czech Republic), dead-burned sintered magnesia from China (expiry review), salmon from Norway (amendment; definitive), 3.5" microdisks from Japan, Taiwan, China, Mexico, Malaysia, the US, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Korea (interim review), photo albums in bookbound form from China (expiry), large aluminium electrolytic capacitors from Japan (refund), and salmon from Norway (interim review). Moreover, the second proceeding concerning unbleached cotton fabrics from China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey was terminated.

The following anti-subsidy determinations were adopted between 1 July and 31 December 1998: ball bearings with a greatest external diameter not exceeding 30 mm from Thailand (expiry), stainless steel bars from India (provisional), woven glass fibre fabric from Taiwan (termination), binder and baler twine from Saudi Arabia (initiation), cochineal carmine from Peru (termination), salmon from Norway (amendment; provisional), polyester textured yarn from India and Korea (initiation), salmon from Norway (amendment), salmon from Norway (amendment; definitive), salmon from Norway (amendment; definitive), certain broad spectrum antibiotics from India (definitive), stainless steel bars from India (definitive), PET film from (India), salmon from Norway (amendment; definitive), and salmon from Norway (interim review).

Finally, seven judgments of the Court of First Instance and Court of Justice relating to trade law issues are summarized in the electronic version of this report.

The full text of this report is available on the EJIL's web site <[www.ejil.org](http://www.ejil.org)>.