REGULATORY AND TRADE NEWS

G20 Digital Ministers met on 6-7 April in Düsseldorf

Ministers from the Group of 20 (G20) met in Düsseldorf, Germany, from 6-7 April to discuss on "Digitalisation: Policies for a Digital Future", the first Ministerial meeting on Digitalisation in the history of the Group. The Ministerial Declaration highlighted the digital economy as "an increasingly important driver of global inclusive economic growth" and its key role "in accelerating economic development, enhancing productivity of existing industries, cultivating new markets and industries and achieving inclusive sustainable growth and development". It also recognised that in many cases the impact of digital transformation remains unknown and that "challenges for inclusiveness, labour markets and structural adjustments […] may need to be managed through appropriate domestic policy settings and international cooperation, for example sharing of best practices".

EU carried out a consultation on Next Generation Internet

The European Commission undertook an open consultation on the Next Generation Internet Initiative and published a report. Participants have indicated that ensuring citizens' sovereignty over their own data and the protection of their privacy is the most important value proposed in the survey. Personal data spaces and artificial intelligence were deemed the most important technology areas for the Internet by 2030.

Proposals at the WTO to ease trade in services and move forward with e-commerce

WTO members discussed five new or enhanced proposals to ease trade in services and move forward on e-commerce issues during meetings of the Working Party on Domestic Regulation and the Services Council on 14-17 March. The proposals stressed the relevance of transparency in the context of domestic licensing procedures and technical standards to avoid unnecessary barriers. One of them proposes a draft text for a Trade Facilitation Agreement for Services. Discussions on submissions to revive negotiations on e-commerce touched upon the moratorium on customs duties on e-commerce transmissions, e-signatures and participation of SMEs in services trade, among others. Members agreed on holding a workshop on the services-related aspects of e-commerce and a seminar on barriers to mode 4. The next regular cluster of services meetings will be held in June.

APEC's employment action plan to leverage big data booms

Labour officials from APEC are working closely with the private sector to bridge the widening gap between skill levels and employment demand in the Asia-Pacific in the digital era. Officials announced the launch of a collaborative initiative during policy development meetings in Nha Trang, Vietnam, in February to

strengthen labour and social protection in the region. The action plan calls for a panel to identify the data-related skills needed by employees as well as to make progress on the implementation of the plan.

BUSINESS NEWS

Bulgarian E-commerce Association joined Ecommerce Europe

The Bulgarian E-commerce Association has joined Ecommerce Europe, a network representing over 25,000 online shops across Europe with the mission of boosting the e-commerce industry by helping decision makers shape policies fit for future sustainable growth. Bulgaria is a key emerging market in the e-commerce sector, showing a growth rate between 10 and 17 percent in 2015.

Dutch banks to launch all-in-one app Payconiq

Six major Dutch banks – ABN Amro, ASN Bank, ING, Rabobank, Regiobank and SNS – have announced they will launch Payconiq, an all-in-one app that will allow users to make direct payments online, this summer. Customers from other banks will also have access to this service. Such connection with other banks anticipates the introduction of Payment Services Directive 2 (PSD2) in Europe late next year. Under this legislation, customers could give third parties access to payment details from their bank to carry out transactions with their payment account.

EVENTS

UNCTAD E-commerce week is ongoing

The third edition of the UNCTAD's E-Commerce Week is taking place from 24 - 28 April 2017 under the theme "Towards Inclusive E-Commerce". The week covers a wide range of topics including cybercrime, data flows, consumer protection, with a focus on development impact, gender, youth and SMEs. The high-level event "Digital Transformation for All: Empowering Entrepreneurs and Small Business" took place on 25 April, setting the tone for the discussions along the week. ITC is participating in several sessions throughout the week, including a joint session with AliResearch and UNCTAD on Inclusive Development and E-Commerce: Case of China. Please see the latest activities on e-commerce on ITC website.

Launch of "eTrade for All" online platform

The launch of "eTrade For All" online platform took place on 25 April during the UNCTAD E-commerce week. The "eTrade for all" initiative was launched at the UNCTAD 14 Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in July 2016, comprising 22 international and regional organizations, national entities and development banks. The online platform will allow countries to connect with potential partners, learn about trends and best practices, and access e-commerce data.

Launch of course on Digital Commerce

This course on Digital Commerce (just-in-time Geneva-based course) aims to assist permanent missions and international organisations in Geneva to deal with digital commerce issues. Its interdisciplinary coverage of e-commerce will provide insights from both digital and trade perspectives. This course is a joint product by the International Trade Centre (ITC), Diplo Foundation, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP). It will take place from 24 April to 31 May and will combine dynamic exchanges in an online classroom with weekly lunchtime learning sessions at the GIP.

The second run of the e-learning course on "E-Commerce for SMEs: An Introduction for Policymakers"

A second edition of the e-learning course on "E-Commerce for SMEs: An Introduction for Policymakers" will

take place in June. This joint course by ITC and Diplo Foundation is designed to help participants better understand the multifaceted concept of e-commerce, the opportunities it offers to SMEs, and the steps necessary to create an enabling environment allowing for a greater uptake of e-commerce by both businesses and consumers. The course is free of charge and Registration is now open.

The second run of the e-learning course on "Building Competitiveness in Trade in Services"

The second edition of the e-learning course on "Building Competitiveness in Trade in Services" will take place in June. This course introduces participants to the different aspects of competitiveness in trade in services, with the aim of identifying specific actions to enhance it. The course lectures cover the importance of trade in services for a country's economy from a developmental perspective, the framework for assessing competitiveness in trade in services, and finally the role which Trade and Investment Support Institutions (TISIs) can play in supporting small and medium service enterprises through policy advocacy, sector development and capacity building. The course is free of charge and Registration is now open.

International Trade Centre

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