



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Special Committee on Agriculture / Council

Subject: Update on negotiations for agriculture running up to the 12th WTO
Ministerial Conference (Geneva, 30 November - 3 December 2021)
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find in Annex a background note on the above-mentioned subject.

The WTO's twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC12) will take place from 30 November to 3 December 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Preparatory negotiations are continuing. In terms of the agriculture segment, everything is still on the table at this point in time, including domestic support, export competition, export restrictions, public stockholding and market access.

However, given the significant differences between the positions of WTO members, the most realistic deliverable at MC12 seems to be a less technical version of the transparency initiative of the EU and its partners and work programs on several other issues for the future. A positive outcome on the proposal to exempt the World Food Program purchases from export restrictions is possible but not certain, mainly due to India's objections. A positive outcome of the review of the Bali decision on tariff rate quota administration seems within reach pending approval by the Committee on Agriculture on 9 November. Potential work programmes on agriculture and also specifically on trade distorting domestic support and the issue of public stockholding are also possible, though substantial divergences remain.

The EU is also working with like-minded countries on a possible Joint Declaration in the framework of Trade and Environmental Sustainability. Commission Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis' call to build an international coalition of trade ministers to promote trade in green goods and services and to convene a ministerial meeting in 2022 devoted to trade, climate and sustainability is related to this effort.

As usual, the Council of the European Union (FAC/TRADE formation) and its Trade Policy Committee will be meeting in the margins of the Conference in Geneva in order to react to any developments during its deliberations and to guide the Commission accordingly. For this purpose a set of Council conclusions on the Union's Position on the Conference is currently being prepared by the Trade Policy Committee (WK 13053/2021 INIT) to be ready for adoption by the Council at the start and at the end of the Conference.