

INTERNAL TRANSPARENCY

Communication from Bulgaria

The following communication, dated 2 November 2000, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria.

1. With a view to enhancing the transparency of decision making in the WTO and providing improved possibilities for a process of consultation with capitals and coordination with domestic agencies and constituencies, an amendment of the Rules of Procedure is proposed to increase the time-frames for submission of proposals and entry into force of decisions.
2. At present, Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure for Sessions of the Ministerial Conference and Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the General Council provide that: "Proposals and amendments to proposals shall normally be introduced in writing and circulated to all representatives not later than twelve hours before the commencement of the meeting at which they are to be discussed". This is clearly not adequate for a transparent and inclusive decision-making process.
3. It is proposed that draft decisions and amendments are submitted before or together with the convening notice for the respective meeting. In exceptional circumstances, proposals can be introduced at a later stage and decisions can be taken on them by consensus but then identical time-frames should be foreseen before such decisions can enter into force in order to allow sufficient time for an orderly domestic coordination process.
4. It is proposed that the Rules of Procedure are amended as follows:

Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure for Sessions of the Ministerial Conference

"Proposals and amendments to proposals shall normally be introduced in writing and circulated to all Members before or together with the provisional agenda for the session.

In exceptional circumstances, if a proposal or an amendment to a proposal is introduced after the circulation of the provisional agenda to Members, a decision on it can be taken by consensus but shall enter into force five weeks after the circulation of its final draft to Members, if the decision is taken at a regular session, or twenty-one days, if it is taken at a special session. If, during these periods, any Member raises an objection, proposes additional consultations, or requires further clarification or reflection, the decision shall not enter into force. If the decision is taken under Rule 29, it can enter into force immediately."

Rule 28 of the Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the General Council

"Proposals and amendments to proposals shall normally be introduced in writing and circulated to all Members before or together with the convening notice for the meeting at which they are to be discussed.

In exceptional circumstances, if a proposal or an amendment to a proposal is introduced after that date, a decision on it can be taken by consensus but shall enter into force ten days after the circulation of its final draft to Members. If, during that period, any Member raises an objection, proposes additional consultations, or requires further clarification or reflection, the decision shall not enter into force. If the decision is taken under Rule 34, it can enter into force immediately."
