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WTO Bali Package streamlining trade

At the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, held from 3 to 7 December 2013, the so-called Bali Package has been adopted. It concerns a series of decisions aimed at streamlining trade, giving developing countries more options for providing food security, boosting least-developed countries' trade and helping development in general.

The Bali package can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

The objectives of the trade facilitation section are to:

- speed up customs procedures;
- make trade easier, faster and cheaper;
- provide clarity, efficiency and transparency;
- reduce bureaucracy and corruption and
- use technological advances.

It includes assistance for developing and least developed countries in updating their infrastructure and training customs officials. The benefits for the world economy are estimated at between 400 billion USD and 1 trillion USD.

A second section in the package concerns an agreement on agriculture. Two issues have been resolved. The first is the so-called shielding on public stockholding programmes for food security in developing countries, protecting the latter from legal challenges in case a country's agreed limits for trade distorting domestic support are breached. The other is about tariff quota administration and how a specific type of import quota is to be handled when the quota is persistently under-filled.

Furthermore, the package foresees a number of decisions on the WTO's regular work. One of them is that it was decided not to charge import duties on electronic transmissions and to encourage continued discussions on electronic commerce in relation to commercial issues, development and new technology.

What does it mean for you?

The WTO decisions resulting from the Bali conference will certainly have to be discussed further on the international scene and finally result in possible amendments of existing legislation in the EU and abroad. As such there will be no immediate consequences for daily trade.

What to do?

It is evident that WTO decisions and agreements have an impact on international trade. As such, it is advisable to closely follow-up these developments which will certainly enable you to make the correct decisions at the right moment.

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