



JOINT MINUTES

Sixth Meeting of the Technical Barriers to Trade Subcommittee of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America

9 November, 2020, 8:00 am CA/ 3:00 pm BXL

Webex Videconference

1. Review of the Agenda

The parties adopted the proposed agenda.

2. Matters related to the implementation of Article 305 of the Association Agreement.

The European Union (EU) requested information on the implementation status of Article 305 of the Agreement. Specifically on paragraph 2, the EU asked for the status of Central American Technical Regulations (RTCA) included in a separate list (other than those already included in Annex XX) and why the recognition of medicinal natural products (included in Annex XX) is not included in this separate list.

Central America (CA) explained that there is no regional regulation to recognize medicinal natural products.

Additionally, the EU requested information on the registration of products by groups or families of products, based on Paragraph 3 of Article 305.

CA clarified that the region has no harmonized legislation to comply with such requirement. To date, no RTCA establishes a procedure. CA requested the EU to provide an example of European legislation that includes such definition and confirmed that there is no record to date of any request for such registration or any known concerns of EU importers in this respect.

Agreements:

- ✓ CA will update the list of recognition procedures and provide status of implementation for other than those included in Annex XX (by 28 February 2021).



- ✓ The EU will provide information to clarify the reasoning behind paragraph 3 on the recognition of groups or families of products (by 28 February 2021).

- **Central American Technical Regulation (Annex XX):**

The EU requested the status on the implementation of Central American Technical Regulations included in Annex XX of the Agreement. Each Regulation included in the list was discussed, as well as their implementation in each Central American country. Panama informed of progress on two RTCAs (Annex XX, 1.a), 2.b) and Central America informed that one pending RTCA was adopted on 30/4/2020 and be implemented as of 1/7/2021 (Annex XX, 2.e) Buenas Practicas de manufactura) and that two RTCAs (currently applicable) are under review (Annex XX, 1.f), 4.d). The pending RTCAs are Annex XX, 4.a), 4.b) and for Panama also 1.c), d), e), f) and 2. b y d) Requisitos para el registro e inscripción.

Agreements:

- ✓ The EU has requested Panama to inform of any progress on their pending RTCAs, even before the next Subcommittee meeting to take place in 2021.

3. Proposed topics

- **Regulation on fire safety equipment. Discriminatory measures (Costa Rica):**

The EU briefly explained the current situation in terms of the recognition of European Safety Certification for fire safety equipment and highlighted that despite this issue being discussed in previous Subcommittee meetings it had no information about a satisfactory solution as of yet.

After reviewing the situation, the EU proposed Costa Rica to consider two possible solutions: The first one, a direct reference to Europeans Standards as legally recognized means of compliance with the applicable regulation administered by the Fire Department, or two, exploring the possibility of a written confirmation of conformity from the Fire Department.

Costa Rica informed that the country has recently concluded a recognition of equivalence of two European standards applicable to fire protection with the corresponding NFPA standards: NFPA 221 (EN 1364-1-2019) and NFPA 252



(EN 1634-1-2016) and that the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC) has worked with the Fire Department to adjust regulations in order to facilitate the recognition of equivalence of foreign standards through INTECO. Costa Rica also mentioned that so far no request has been received for a NFPA 72 equivalence. The EU requested the Ministry of Foreign Trade to facilitate a dialogue between the company and competent authorities to guide them through the procedure.

The EU also requested other CA countries to comment on their procedures for recognition of equivalence. Nicaragua explained that they have individual procedures for each product in each specific regulation.

Agreements:

- ✓ Costa Rica will send information on the procedure for recognition of equivalence of standards for fire protection products (by 15 December 2020) and the Ministry of Foreign Trade is willing to facilitate a direct contact between the company, MEIC, INTECO and the Fire Department.
- ✓ Honduras, Panama, El Salvador and Guatemala agreed to consult with their competent authorities to identify their procedures for recognition of equivalence and notify the EU (by 28 February 2021).
- **Regulation (EU) 2018/848, establishing the new rules on organic production and labelling of organic products.**

Central America requested information on regulation EU 2018/848, specifically on future requirements and secondary legislation under preparation. The EU explained the regulation in depth, including procedures required to negotiate bilateral agreements on equivalence and emphasized the new postponed date for the entry into force, as of January 2022. The EU answered specific questions previously sent by Central America.

Agreements:

- ✓ The Parties agreed to maintain a dialogue on this matter. .
- **The non-renewal of pesticides by the EU.**



Central America requested additional information on the non-renewal of pesticides by the EU to better understand EU legal framework and procedures. CA sent a list of questions in advance that were answered during the meeting.

Agreements:

The Parties agreed to maintain a dialogue on this matter.

4. Review and agreement of minutes

At the end of the meeting, delegates of the Parties reviewed the draft minutes and reached consensus.

Final minutes have been approved on 12 November 2020 as an expression of all Parties agreement.

Annex: List of participants



Annex

List of participants

European Union

- Jana Krestynova, European Commission, DG TRADE
- Luis Martin Plaza, European Commission, DG AGRI
- Felix Alexander Lutz, European Commission, DG AGRI
- Maria Tabernero, European Commission, DG SANTE
- Silvia Miranda, EU Delegation in Costa Rica
- Massimo De Luca, EU Delegation in Costa Rica

Costa Rica

- Alejandra Porras, Ministerio de Comercio Exterior
- Alejandro Patiño, Ministerio de Comercio Exterior
- Angela Sanchez, Ministerio de Comercio Exterior
- Federico Áreas, Ministerio de Comercio Exterior
- José Miguel Céspedes, Ministerio de Comercio Exterior
- Luisa Diaz, Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio
- Ronald Cortés, Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio
- Tatiana Cruz, Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Comercio

Nicaragua

- Karla Delgado, Ministerio de Salud
- Ramón Noguera, Instituto de Protección y Sanidad Agropecuaria
- Ricardo Orozco, Ministerio de Salud
- Cassandra Zeledón, Ministerio de Fomento, Industria y Comercio
- Denis Saavedra, Ministerio de Fomento, Industria y Comercio

Honduras

- César Diaz, Secretaria de Desarrollo Económico

Guatemala

- Magin Beteta, Ministerio de Economía
- Dinora Alvarez, Ministerio de Economía
- Humberto Maldonado, Ministerio de Economía
- José Fernando Reyes, Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social
- Bayron Gil, Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación
- Luis Armando Menendez, Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación
- Jorge Gomez, Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación
- Francisco Vásquez, Ministerio de Economía



Panamá

- Carmela Castillo, Autoridad Panameña de Seguridad de Alimentos-
- Pablo Moreno, Ministerio de Desarrollo Agropecuario
- Rubén Serracín, Ministerio de Desarrollo Agropecuario
- Ruth Harding, Ministerio de Comercio e Industrias
- Milagros Velarde, Ministerio de Comercio e Industrias
- Alvaro Ríos, Ministerio de Comercio e Industrias

El Salvador

- Iván Bethancourt, Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería
- José Alvarez, Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería
- Gloria Portillo, Ministerio de Economía
- Yasmara Fuentes, Ministerio de Economía