Agreement on the expansion of trade in information technology products (ITA)

2016/0067(NLE) - 30/03/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude, on behalf of the European Union, an agreement in the form of the Declaration on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products (ITA).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: the Ministerial Declaration on Trade in Information Technology Products, commonly referred to as the Information Technology Agreement ('ITA'), was adopted in Singapore on 13 December 1996. Paragraph 3 of the Annex to the ITA states that participants are to meet periodically under the auspices of the Council on Trade in Goods of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to review the product coverage with a view to agreeing, by consensus, whether it is appropriate to modify the Attachments to that Annex to incorporate additional products.

On 8 July 2009, the Council authorised the Commission to negotiate a review of the ITA with a view to expanding its product coverage to reflect technological developments and convergence. On 28 July 2015, the participants in the negotiations issued a Declaration on the Expansion of Trade in Information Technology Products ('the Declaration on the expansion of the ITA'), which records the results of the negotiations.

During the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference held in Nairobi from 15 to 18 December 2015, the participants in the negotiations issued the Ministerial Declaration which endorses and opens for acceptance the Declaration on the expansion of the ITA. The Ministerial Declaration also records the agreement of the participants in the negotiations with the draft schedules submitted by each of them pursuant to paragraph 5 of the Declaration on the expansion of the ITA, which are included in WTO document G/MA/W/117.

CONTENT: the draft Council Decision seeks the approval, on behalf of the European Union, of the Declaration on the expansion of the ITA and the schedules submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 thereof.

For further details please refer to the summary of the initial legislative proposal dated from 8.3.2016.