

What concrete advantages will the agreement bring for Finnish companies?

The agreement will be binding on all WTO members, as soon as they implement the agreement domestically. Developing countries can be granted additional time and support for the implementation of the contractual obligations.

- Information, forms and country-specific requirements relevant to trading will be available **more easily and free of charge**, for example, through the Internet. Less time will be spent on searching, and information on required formalities will be obtained more quickly.
- **Advance information** shall be given on new trade regulations and laws, and **stakeholders** must be consulted during the drafting phase. In this way, the agreement will enable commercial enterprises to better predict the business environment, and public authorities will receive valuable information about the practical impact of the planned measures.
- Countries should strive to **simplify** trading formalities and documentation requirements. Requirements should be applied in such a way that they serve quick release of goods and help save time and costs. In a situation with multiple alternative courses of action, **the one that least hinders trade** should be chosen. It is also encouraged that copies of documents should be accepted.
- Customs clearance can be **started before the arrival of the goods**. Companies may submit the necessary documents in advance, and customs can start working on them in a timely manner. In this way, the goods can be released more quickly after their physical arrival.
- While facilitating trade, security must not be overlooked. **Risk analysis** shall be applied where possible. This will **facilitate trade** considerably, as 100% inspections will not be conducted any more.
- Wherever possible, **electronic** means shall be provided for advance notifications, as well as for payments of taxes and fees. This not only expedites the process but also reduces the possibility of errors and corruption.
- Advance rulings must be issued in writing **within a reasonable time** after the data required have been supplied. Companies will know in advance how much they will pay taxes and duties on their goods.
- **Service charges** shall be based on services rendered or on the export/import transaction, and information on service charges should be readily available. The ease of access to information will help root out corruption, but also helps the company to better estimate future costs.

- Customs' decisions can be administratively/judicially **appealed**, and any company considering an appeal has the right to obtain information about the factors that led to the original decision.
- If a company makes a mistake in customs clearance resulting in a fine, the **fine must be reasonable in respect of the mistake made**. The company is also entitled to obtain written grounds for the penalty.
- If the customs clearance of goods involves tests or sampling, the company may, after an adverse finding, request an **opportunity to have another testing body to conduct a second test**. The authority must provide information on alternative testing locations.
- Customs procedures and document requirements should be **consistent** within a customs area and **electronic submission of documents shall not be prevented**.
- Customs formalities for perishable products should be conducted **as quickly as possible**, once all the necessary requirements have been met. In exceptional circumstances, this should also be possible outside office hours. Preshipment inspections of goods shall not be required in relation to tariff classification and customs valuation (this refers to so-called private inspection companies). The agreement will also **prohibit a requirement for the mandatory use of customs brokers**. The use of a customs broker will be the company's own choice.
- **Authorized operators** shall be provided with additional trade facilitation measures. These may be low documentary requirements, low rate of physical inspections, or guarantees, for example. There shall be specified criteria to qualify as an authorized operator, and such criteria shall not restrict e.g. the participation of small and medium-sized enterprises.
- There shall be special procedures for **expedited shipments** in order to ensure smooth traffic (in particular, for goods entered through air cargo facilities).
- The agreement guarantees **freedom of transit**. In addition, the agreement encourages members to make available, where practicable, physically separate infrastructure for traffic in transit.
- The agreement also encourages members to establish or maintain a **single window**. This would enable traders to submit all the necessary documentation through a single entry point to the participating authorities. Furthermore, it is recommended that all trading procedures established by members are based on **international standards**.
- All of this contributes to the fact that goods will be transported across borders as efficiently as possible: companies will **save** money and the goods will reach the **consumer** faster and often at a lower cost.

- The agreement takes into account that **developing countries** may need more time and assistance in the implementation of the contractual obligations. However, they will not be exempt from the obligations, but the contractual obligations will bind all members of the WTO.
- The agreement also supports the integration of developing countries into the global economy. Finland in cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) will contribute €3 million in order to support the implementation of the agreement in Eastern and Southern Africa.