



**REPORT OF THE SPS EXPERTS MEETING OF 1 MARCH 2021
TO PREPARE THE WTO SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY COMMITTEE OF MARCH 2021**

The meeting was convened to prepare the upcoming regular meeting of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS Committee) that will take place virtually on **25 -26 March 2021**.

I. GENERAL ISSUES

COM informed the participants about the different events planned in the margins of the next SPS Committee meeting:

- **22 March** – meeting of the working group on approval procedures. Based on the suggestion of Canada (G/SPS/W/328/Rev.1) a Working Group on Approval Procedures was established and already had its first meeting at the margins of the last SPS Committee meeting of November.
- **23 March** – thematic session on African Swine Fever (G/SPS/GEN/1874 rev 1.). The thematic session was approved at the last SPS Committee meeting based on the proposal of the EU. COM provided an overview of the main sections and the speakers of the event. The final agenda will be circulated by the WTO SPS Secretariat in mid-March.
- **24 March** – informal meeting. Similarly to the previous time, it will discuss the follow-up of the 5th review of the implementation of the SPS Agreement, the proposed SPS declaration for the 12th WTO ministerial conference and COVID issues.

II. SPECIFIC ISSUES

A. Issues of possible interest to third countries.

The issues raised by third countries at the previous SPS Committee meetings were discussed and an update was given by COM on those topics, which were likely to be raised at the next meeting.

B. Issues of interest to the EU

B.1. Possible specific trade concerns (STCs)

The issues raised by the EU at the previous SPS Committee meetings were discussed and an update was given by COM on those topics, which were likely to be raised at the next meeting.

B.2. Monitoring of the use of international standards

COM informed the Member States on cases of third countries trade restrictions not in line with existing international standards (ASF, HPAI) and outlined its planned actions to remedy the situation.

B.3. SPS Market Access Working Group (MAWG)

The next meeting of the SPS MAWG is scheduled for 14 April 2021 in a virtual format. COM outlined the proposed agenda and invited the participants to comment on it.

B.4. SPS market access issues and possible bilateral meetings (in and outside Geneva)

COM informed MS about a number of SPS market access issues and its intention to request bilateral meetings with third countries on the margins of the next SPS Committee meeting and other upcoming meetings with third countries. To prepare the bilateral meetings with third countries, Member States were reminded to provide information on the latest developments on market access issues.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

General SPS concerns and EU import related issues should be addressed to the EU SPS Notification Authority and Enquiry Point at sps@ec.europa.eu and general trade and SPS export related issues to TRADE-SPS@ec.europa.eu

Member States are kindly reminded that the Commission would appreciate being kept informed of any significant developments with respect to MS trade concerns particularly when the Commission has been involved in related multilateral or bilateral discussions.