

EUROPEAN COMMISSION HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate A
TRADE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Directorate D

REPORT OF THE SPS EXPERTS MEETING OF 18 OCTOBER 2023 TO PREPARE THE WTO SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY COMMITTEE OF NOVEMBER

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 in a hybrid format on **15** -**17 November 2023**.

I. GENERAL ISSUES

The Commission informed that the regular SPS Committee meeting will be preceded by informal meetings on Monday, 13 November (afternoon) and Wednesday, 15 November (morning) covering the SPS Declaration work programme and other issues identified by the Members. In addition, the Commission informed the participants about the different side events planned in the margins of the next SPS Committee meeting.

- Thematic session on risk communication, misinformation and disinformation (14 November).
- EU side hybrid event on Better Training for Safer Food (14 November lunch time).
- Oxford University Press book launch side event (15 November)
- France informed about a CTE side event (14 November) with the participation of the French Research Institute on agri-environmental practices.

II. SPECIFIC ISSUES

A. Statements from Members and ISSBs

The Commission informed about its intention to provide information on the BTSF side event at the formal Committee meeting.

B. Operation and implementation of the SPS Agreement

The Commission informed about the upcoming the sixth review process and expressed support to build on the work done during the implementation of the work programme established by MC12 SPS Declaration.

C. Cross-cutting issues

The Commission provided information on the SPS Declaration work programme and invited experts to exchange views on the factual summary and draft report to the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, in particular considering the outcome of the last Intersessional consultation meeting in September and the next steps.

For the Thematic sessions in 2024, the Commission invited Member States to propose ideas.

D. Issues of possible interest to third countries.

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

E. Issues of interest to the EU

E.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 the Commission on those topics, which were likely to be raised at the next meeting.

E.2. Monitoring of the use of international standards

The Commission informed the Member States that it will make the usual statements about many third countries imposing trade restrictions which are not in line with existing international standards (ASF, HPAI).

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

The next meeting of the SPS MAWG is scheduled for 7 December. The Commission outlined the proposal agenda and invited the participants to comment on it.

E.4. SPS market access issues and possible bilateral meetings

The Commission informed about a number of SPS market access issues and its intention to request bilateral meetings in 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.

III. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The Commission recalled that general SPS concerns and EU import related issues should be addressed to the EU SPS Notification Authority and Enquiry Point (sps@ec.europa.eu) and general trade and SPS export related issues to (TRADE-SPS@ec.europa.eu). In this regard, Member States were kindly reminded that the Commission would appreciate being kept informed of any significant developments

with respect to Member States trade concerns particularly when the Commission has been involved in related multilateral or bilateral discussions.