



Express Delivery Sector Welcomes WTO Services Domestic Regulation Plurilateral

The members of the Global Express Association¹ welcome the announcement today by sixty-seven WTO Member Countries that they have successfully concluded negotiations on a Services Domestic Regulation reference paper. It demonstrates that the WTO negotiating function can deliver through a plurilateral process.

Transparent and predictable licensing regimes, managed by an independent authority, are a key supplement to market access commitments for international service providers, such as express delivery carriers. The opposite – arbitrary licensing conditions, managed by authorities with vested interests in a specific market – can render market access commitments meaningless thus bringing no value.

This new agreement sends a powerful signal about best licensing practices and also acknowledges the need to ensure that measures do not discriminate between men and women.

Express delivery carriers are currently witnessing the adoption of arbitrary and harmful licensing regimes in several WTO Member Countries, specifically in some developing and least developed countries. Such licensing regimes provide an unfair competitive advantage to certain suppliers of services and result in overall worse logistics for the country. They render exports from those countries more costly and complex, in particular for micro, small and medium size enterprises, and end up restricting trade.

The Express Delivery sector looks forward to the signatories to this new agreement scheduling their commitments on domestic regulation, and to more WTO Members joining it in turn.

As global service providers, express delivery carriers value highly the multilateral rules-based trading system. The GEA calls on WTO Members to find the necessary compromises that will allow it to stay dynamic and relevant.

Geneva, 2 December 2021

¹ GEA represents the three leading express delivery carriers: DHL Express, FedEx Express and UPS.