



Global Services Coalition Statement on The JSI E-Commerce Negotiations and Release of New OECD Services Study (<https://doi.org/10.1787/3cc371ac-en>)

Monday 24 June, 2024 - Services industry leaders gather today in Washington D.C for the 12th Annual Global Services Summit, which also marks the 10th anniversary of the OECD Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI), which monitors global developments in services, including digital services, trade restrictions. Meanwhile, with a view towards eventual conclusion of a deal, participants in the WTO JSI negotiations on E-commerce assemble in Geneva tomorrow, to take stock of progress in political level discussions over recent weeks.

At this important juncture, the co-convenors of the Global Services Coalition call on governments and policymakers worldwide to take heed of the OECD findings: to refocus attention on the importance of services to the digital transformation and to all international commercial transactions, especially online electronic commerce.

Ten years of dedicated OECD research have documented that services trade barriers have remained consistently high, with little change in the average level of restrictions, while digital regulatory regimes have shown a marked ongoing fragmentation, with considerable negative impact on the cost of doing international business, hence limiting the productivity gains and development opportunities which flow from trade

The latest OECD updates come at an opportune time as political level discussions towards a WTO agreement on E-commerce intensify. The global services business community hopes that participants in the JSI on E-commerce will take note of the OECD findings and redouble efforts to resolve remaining issues and secure a benchmark WTO agreement to facilitate digital trade.

The GSC has worked consistently over the last 5 years to help ensure that the JSI outcomes on E-commerce are commercially meaningful. We stress the importance of broad coverage of all services sectors. We ask that privacy be protected without becoming an unnecessary barrier to cross-border data flows that underpin the digital economy. We consider that all businesses big and small, and all customers everywhere, in all sectors of the economy and in both developed and developing countries, will benefit from a more transparent, more closely aligned regulatory environment for online trade.

A JSI agreement must also offer a lasting solution on customs duties on electronic transmissions; it must encourage greater interoperability of electronic payment systems; and take vital trade facilitation steps to build public trust in electronic identity and authentication. The JSI should provide a clear foundation for further negotiations as the digital economy evolves, including on core data-related issues. It must take consideration of developing countries' interests and remain open to all WTO members to join.

We urge all JSI participants, as well as all WTO members, to take advantage of this important window of opportunity to apply the lessons learned from the OECD findings released today. The OECD estimates that on a global basis, barriers to digitally enabled services have risen by 25% over the last decade. Strong cooperation on improving the international rulebook on digital trade is needed to reverse this trend. There is no time to waste.

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