



Request for observing the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) on the IT products eligible for the duty-free treatment



Cologne, 23 September, 2008

The industry associations would like to request the European Communities (EC):

1) to fairly observe the concessions granted by the EC following the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) of the World Trade Organization pursuant to which the EC committed to eliminate duties and other charges on all Information Technology (IT) products listed in the Annexes to the ITA.

2) not to arbitrarily and unilaterally adopt classification decisions concerning IT products which result in the application of dutiable treatment on those products.

As well-known in the worldwide trade area, on 28 May, 2008, the U.S. and Japan made a formal consultation request at WTO against the EC concerning the tariff treatment the EC applies on certain IT products (i.e. set-top boxes, flat-panel displays and digital multi-function machines). Taiwan also submitted a similar consultation request. Furthermore, Singapore, China and the Philippines requested joining the consultations as third parties.

We believe such requests clearly reflect the fact that the EC has arbitrarily and unilaterally decided to reclassify certain IT products and, as a result, apply an import duty on them, thereby acting inconsistently with the EC's obligations under GATT 1994 Articles II:1(a) and II:1(b) for the above three products as well as under GATT 1994 Articles X:1 and X:2 for set-top boxes.



photo imaging council





We will continue to express, as we have done before, our concerns and to make claims regarding the invalidity of any relevant actions in the trade area so that the duty-free treatment applicable to IT products pursuant to the ITA can be maintained and secured.



Finally, the EC has on 15 September, 2008 presented the WTO with a proposal to update and expand product coverage of the ITA taking account of rapid technological innovation and convergence. We will also keep paying our most careful attention to ensure that any proposal to re-negotiate the ITA does not invalidate the concessions already granted to IT products. The EC has illegally eroded those concessions through the above mentioned unilateral and arbitrary classification decisions. Such infringement of the existing concessions must be remedied independently of any negotiations of the ITA for the future.



- end -

-
1. Asociacia Dovozcov Audiovizualnej Techniky (ADAT, Slovakia),
 2. Associazione Italiana Foto & Digital Imaging (AIF, Italy),
 3. Associacao Empresarial das Sectores Electrico, Electrodomestico, Fotografico e Electronico (AGEFE, Portugal),
 4. Asociatia Producatorilor si Distribuitorilor de Echipamente de Tehnologie Informatiei si comunicatiilor (APDE TIC, Romania),
 5. Bulgarian Association of Information Technologies (bait, Bulgaria),
 6. Camera & Imaging Products Association (CIPA, Japan),
 7. The Association of Electronics Wholesalers (Finland),
 8. European Photo and Imaging Association (EPIA, Pan-Europe),
 9. Association of the Hungarian Representatives of the Photo machineries Manufacturers (FOTOMKE, Hungary),
 10. Fotobranschens Leverandorforening (Denmark),
 11. International Imaging Industry Association (i3a, USA),
 12. Photo Imaging Council (pic, UK),
 13. Photoindustrie-Verband e.V. (PIV, Germany),
 14. Syndicat des Entreprises de L'image de la Photo et de la Communication (SIPEC, France),
 15. Svaz Obchodu a Cestovniho Ruchu Cr – Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism (Czech),
 16. Photo Marketing Association International (PMA, USA),
 17. Greek Manufacturers, Distributors & Dealers of Photo Products and Image Systems Association (SEKAF, Greece),
 18. Photographic Arts Federation of Turkey (TFSF, Turkey),
 19. ZIPSEE (Poland),
 20. Elektronik Branschen (Sweden)
-

For further information contact: info@cipa.jp