

Economic Affairs Officer to the WTO and UN in Geneva

Experience of a Small Mission



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Which institutions does our work cover?

✦ UN:

- UNECE with its 9 expert bodies + EXCOM
- UNCTAD with numerous bodies, conferences
- WIPO with numerous expert meetings

✦ WTO with its 43 bodies and 27 accession Working Parties - MAIN DUTY!

✦ Other:

- Candidatures
- EFTA - HQ
- ITC
- IPU...

Levels

- ◆ Political (GC, GA, EXCOM...HoD) – includes voting or other general and political issues
- ◆ Expert (experts from capital -line ministries)
- ◆ Combined

e.g. UNECE – follow the work (*executive committee*)

- ✦ Commission - biannual
- ✦ Forward materials, invitations, letters – *Post office!*
- ✦ Technical meetings – upon request
- ✦ Logistical support for delegations →

e.g. UNCTAD – follow the work

- ✦ Participate in TDB (*trade and development board*)
- ✦ Preparation for Ministerial Meeting (every 4 y.)
- ✦ Participation in regional group D →
- ✦ Forward materials, invitations, letters
- ✦ Thematic meetings
- ✦ Logistical support for delegations

e.g. WIPO – follow the work – more at political level

- ◆ Participation at GA (*General Assambly*), CoCo (*coordination committee*) – *political level, implications*
- ◆ Participation in regional group CEBS (*Central European and Baltic States*)
- ◆ forwarding materials, logistical support to delegations

e.g. EFTA

- ◆ communication with the Secretariat
- ◆ organise biannual meetings of the Joint EFTA – RH Committee
- ◆ forward materials, contact point...

WTO

Technical work – administration

“Post office”

- ✦ Info on meetings - Forward, invite delegations to come, warn if important (later report...), register delegations/badges
- ✦ Seminars – forward invitations, coordinate election process, receive candidacies and forward to WTO, follow up
- ✦ Notifications – forward to WTO, enquire on procedures and answer questions, connect, inform about due notifications...
- ✦ Questionnaires; requests for data, financial contributions etc – forward to capital (with reports), forward to WTO – answer/letter...

Technical assistance e.g.

✦ WTO

- cca 20 seminars for capital based people per year (Ge and out)
- 2 seminars per year organised

✦ UNCTAD

- Investment policy
- Paid expenses for experts (LDCs)

✦ UNECE, WIPO – few times a year they cover expenses for your experts to come

✦ ITC – projects, no proper funds

WTO – “*elite part*”

- ◆ MC – Ministerial conference
- ◆ GC – General Council
- ◆ DDA/DDR – *Doha development agenda/round*
 - Negotiations; Special Sessions, Negotiating groups
 - ◆ NAMA (non agricultural market access) - industry
 - ◆ AG – agriculture
 - ◆ Services
 - ◆ TRIPS (trade related aspects of intellectual property rights)
 - ◆ Rules (AD – antidumping, subsidies, incl. fish.subs.)
 - ◆ Trade Facilitation
 - ◆ Trade and Environment
 - ◆ Trade and development
 - ◆ Dispute settlement mechanism



WTO DDR negotiations

- ✦ Participate in meetings and Lobbying
 - Bilateral, Plurilateral, Multilateral
 - Open ended, Closed
 - Formal, Informal
- ✦ Write reports (inform “the capital”)→
- ✦ Formulate position of your country
 - Instructions →
- ✦ Writing and giving statements
i.e. expressing position/views/interests
- ✦ Drafting of new documents
- ✦ Examining different negotiating proposals –
giving recommendations to the capital

WTO – other bodies

- ◆ Various Councils
- ◆ DSB - Dispute settlement Body
- ◆ TPRB - Trade Policy Review Body
- ◆ Various committees and working parties - Notifications (present, defend, explain)

Economic counsellor, diplomat or manager?

- ◆ Managing substance (economy, AG, IP...)
- ◆ Managing time – Papers, Meetings, Reports
- ◆ Managing people
 - Contacts from “the capital” (MFA, MEco, MAg...)
 - *INSTRUCTIONS*
 - Geneva contacts - delegates/Secretariat
 - Delegations from “the capital”

Managing substance

- ✦ E.g. NAMA or AG modalities, RULES text, Trade Facilitation text, TRIPS...
- ✦ Understand:
 - What (including technical terms – NAMA, TRIPS, swiss formula, cuts, flexibilities...)
 - who supports what/whom (alliances, positions)
 - Implications for your country
 - your position, interests & red line

Managing time (“catch-up”)

- ✦ Managing (fighting with) papers
 - huge quantity – how to decide what to do with them
 - ✦ Send to capital – simple forwarding or some processing?
 - ✦ Keep for archive
 - ✦ Disposal
- ✦ Meetings – 10-13, 15-18 every day
 - Several at the same time – prioritise
 - Labour division - Work and info sharing with colleagues →
 - Regional groups →
- ✦ Reports →

Comparison – Number of diplomats for WTO only in some other missions



◆ Iceland	◆ 5
◆ Ireland	◆ 4
◆ Denmark	◆ 4
◆ Finland	◆ 4
◆ Poland	◆ 4
◆ Czech republic	◆ 4
◆ Slovakia	◆ 3
◆ Lithuania	◆ 4
◆ Latvia	◆ 3
◆ Estonia	◆ 3
◆ Romania	◆ 3
◆ Bulgaria	◆ 2
◆ Austria	◆ 3
◆ Hungary	◆ 4
◆ Cro, BiH, MK, Alb, Srb	◆ 1/2

Reports

- ◆ Relevant! Short! Clear!
 - ◆ Explain background, terms and abbreviations!
1. Analysis of documents
(short analysis of a new released, important, big document e.g. draft modalities in NAMA or AG)
 2. Report from the meetings
 - Main points
 - what's new – explain (issue - problem, terms – cocktail approach, menu approach, early harvest, single undertaking, variable geometry...)
 - Position of main players (EU,US, India, Brazil etc)
 - Your interest/position
 - Comment/Recommendations – your own contribution!

Regional groups/ WTO groupings

- ◆ Info sharing
- ◆ Briefing from closed meetings
- ◆ (Re)Formulating common position – report, instructions (approval)
- ◆ Stronger! Impression!
 - One voice but many voices
 - Coordinator makes statement
 - Members of the group support it

Croatia - RAMs

- ✦ Recently acceded members
- ✦ why RAMs?
 - Accession negotiations
 - Conditionality - Low tariffs as a result
 - High price paid
- ✦ Who are RAMs: Croatia, Panama, Jordan, Ecuador, Mongolia, Albania, Armenia, Moldova, Kirgizstan, Vietnam, Macedonia, S. Arabia, Tonga, Ukraine, Cape Verde, China, Chinese Taipei and Oman.
- ✦ Coordinator – Chinese Taipei

Instructions from “the capital” ...

- ✦ Your input/request → capital (report, call, letter...)
 - Dont forget to add – opinion of other countries and main players...
 - Capital may ask additional input (view of XY, secretariat, legal procedures...)
- ✦ Capital gives instruction
- ✦ Final product – Instruction – follow-up -Your statement at the meeting or letter/note verbale to the Secretariat/Mission of ABC country

Contacts - getting and cultivating

- ✦ Protocolary duties, socialising
- ✦ invite colleagues for a coffee, lunch
- ✦ visit them at their mission
- ✦ come to their reception/national day
- ✦ invite them to your reception
- ✦ write them Season's greetings card etc
- ✦ **See as many people you can, talk to them, exchange business cards**
- ✦ **007 in action...Ask their opinion/share views**

...contacts...

- ◆ 007 in action...ask your colleagues about meetings that you did not attend or not entirely – or not understand...
- ◆ Informal work division/info sharing

Logistical support to delegations

- ✦ Book a hotel
- ✦ Register them for UN/WTO etc. (reg.form, note verbale)/pick up badges
- ✦ Pick up from the airport, Organise VIP salon if VIP
- ✦ Organise lunch, visit to the Mission
- ✦ Organise meetings
- ✦ Drive them to the meetings etc

Languages –UN vs WTO

- ◆ UN – 6 official languages
- ◆ Informal only English

- ◆ WTO - Not part of the UN
- ◆ 3 official languages
- ◆ Relevance of French and Spanish
 - Which countries use them, Secretariat,
 - life in Geneva (communication with services providers e.g. Internet)

How does it look in practice?

e.g.1 – change of bovine meat quotas

- what? substance; - who?
- why? respect WTO rules and procedures
- initial action – Croatian request, offers, responses from other members
- follow-up -Organise meetings, book rooms, forward letters, write letters and mails, get contacts, call colleagues, remind them, report, negotiate, consult WTO for procedures

e.g. 2

Accession of B&H, MN, Serbia etc

- Inform the capital about the dates of meeting and possibility of bilaterals
- Forward the report and documents
- Ask for instructions/questions
- On basis of instructions, write a statement; forward questions to WTO
- Meeting – read a statement
- *Example -B&H -Law on protection of the domestic production within the CEFTA Agr., Law on tobacco – discriminatory; Excise duties on tobacco; Law on oil products)*
- Write a report

e.g.3

NAMA – new ideas of the chair

- ✦ We receive the new proposal, read carefully
- ✦ Own enquiry...007 in action...
 - Call e.g.EU/WTO etc to ask their position
 - Call colleagues to hear view of others
 - Coordination within the RAMs group
- ✦ Write a report with recommendations
- ✦ Ask instructions
- ✦ Present instructions at the meeting
- ✦ Or write a letter etc

e.g.4

candidatures

- ✦ A note verbale received from a country XY asking for support (real examples)
- ✦ Forward it to capital
- ✦ Capital checks if possible, and maybe proposes an exchange of supports (quid pro quo)
- ✦ Informally we enquire if the country XY is interested in exchange
- ✦ Write a note verbale to country XY with the new offer of exchange of supports
- ✦ Country XY accepts, and sends a note verbale to confirm
- ✦ Send a report about exchange of candidatures
- ✦ During the voting, you vote for them and vv
- ✦ Send a report to the capital

e.g. 5

alignements/co-sponsoring

- ✦ Country XY asks us to support their proposal (sending a letter, call us for a meeting) (real examples)
- ✦ I write a report/forward their letter to the capital
- ✦ Capital approves
- ✦ I inform the country XY and the WTO (call+letter/mail)
- ✦ At the meeting of the relevant WTO body I give the statement
- ✦ WTO adds us on the list of co-sponsors and publishes it as an official document

e.g. 6

DSB – RH&H resolved case

- ✦ Old issue from 2003 (restriction of pork meat import from H to RH), never resolved
- ✦ Capital and our Mission in Brussels gives initiative
- ✦ We ask WTO for procedures
- ✦ We talk with colleagues in H Mission
- ✦ We suggest our M Ag to write a letter to H Min Ag
- ✦ H Min Ag gives instruction to H Mission to, jointly with us, write a letter to WTO (attached)
- ✦ WTO publishes a communication by which we end a case (attached)
- ✦ Report to the capital (attached)

e.g. 7

Reformulating the group position

In NAMA and AG negotiations

- ✦ Coordinator propose to diminish the initial demands
- ✦ Report to capital, with explanation and recommendation
- ✦ Capital responds, accepts but with a slight change and insists on some demands
- ✦ On RAMs meeting I inform about the proposal and lobby for our demands
- ✦ One accepted, one not!
- ✦ Report to capital; capital accepts
- ✦ New position of RAMs formulated

Questions...

Thank you
for your attention!

