

consultation with the Executive Director. The Advisory Commission may undertake foreign travel in pursuit of its studies and coordinate, sponsor, or oversee projects, studies, events, or other activities that it deems desirable and necessary in fulfilling its functions.

For more information on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, please visit www.state.gov/pdcommission. For more information on the upcoming public meeting, contact the Commission's Designated Federal Official, Jeff Daigle, at DaigleJF@state.gov.

John J. Daigle,

Designated Federal Official, Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, Department of State.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

[Docket Number USTR-2018-0035]

Request for Comments on Negotiating Objectives for a U.S.-European Union Trade Agreement

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Request for comments and notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: On October 16, 2018, the United States Trade Representative notified Congress of the Administration's intention to enter into negotiations on a trade agreement with the European Union (EU). The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) is seeking public comments on a proposed U.S.-EU trade agreement, including U.S. interests and priorities, in order to develop U.S. negotiating positions. You can provide comments in writing and orally at a public hearing. The Administration's aim in negotiations with the EU is to address both tariff and non-tariff barriers and to achieve fairer, more balanced trade.

DATES:

December 10, 2018: Deadline for the submission of written comments and for written notification of your intent to testify, as well as a summary of your testimony at the public hearing.

December 14, 2018: The Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) will hold a public hearing beginning at 9:30 a.m., at the Auditorium of the Herbert C. Hoover Building, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20230.

ADDRESSES: You should submit notifications of intent to testify and

written comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments in parts 2 and 3 below. For alternatives to on-line submissions, please contact Yvonne Jamison at (202) 395-3475.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For procedural questions concerning written comments, please contact Yvonne Jamison at (202) 395-3475. Direct all other questions to David Weiner, Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Europe, at (202) 395-9679.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

The decision to launch negotiations for a U.S.-EU trade agreement is an important step toward achieving fairer, more balanced trade with the EU and follows the July 25, 2018 meeting between President Trump and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. In the joint statement issued following their July 25th meeting, President Trump and President Juncker affirmed the intention of the United States and the EU to address both tariff and non-tariff barriers in their trading relationship.

On October 16, 2018, following consultations with relevant Congressional committees, the United States Trade Representative informed Congress that the President intends to commence negotiations with the EU for a U.S.-EU Trade Agreement.

2. Public Comment and Hearing

The TPSC invites interested parties to submit comments and/or oral testimony to assist USTR as it develops negotiating objectives and positions for the agreement, including with regard to objectives identified in section 102 of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (19 U.S.C. 4201). In particular, the TPSC invites interested parties to comment on issues including, but not limited to, the following:

a. General and product-specific negotiating objectives for the proposed agreement.

b. Relevant barriers to trade in goods and services between the U.S. and the EU that should be addressed in the negotiations.

c. Economic costs and benefits to U.S. producers and consumers of removal or reduction of tariffs and removal or reduction of non-tariff barriers on articles traded with the EU.

d. Treatment of specific goods (described by HTSUS numbers) under the proposed agreement, including comments on:

i. Product-specific import or export interests or barriers.

ii. Experience with particular measures that should be addressed in the negotiations.

iii. Ways to address export priorities and import sensitivities in the context of the proposed agreement.

e. Customs and trade facilitation issues that should be addressed in the negotiations.

f. Sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical barriers to trade that should be addressed in the negotiations.

g. Other measures or practices that undermine fair market opportunities for U.S. businesses, workers, farmers, and ranchers that should be addressed in the negotiations.

USTR must receive written comments no later than Monday, December 10, 2018.

USTR requests that small businesses, generally defined by the Small Business Administration as firms with fewer than 500 employees, or organizations representing small business members, which submit comments to self-identify as such, so that we may be aware of issues of particular interest to small businesses.

The TPSC will hold a hearing on December 14, 2018, in the Auditorium of the Herbert C. Hoover Building, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20230. If necessary, the hearing will continue on the next business day. Persons wishing to testify at the hearing must provide written notification of their intention by December 10, 2018. The notification of intent to testify must be made in the 'type comment' field under docket number USTR-2018-0035 on the www.regulations.gov website and should include the name, address, and telephone number of the person presenting the testimony. You should attach a summary of the testimony by using the 'upload file' field. The file name also should include who will be presenting the testimony. The TPSC limits remarks at the hearing to no more than five minutes to allow for possible questions.

3. Requirements for Submissions

In order to ensure the timely receipt and consideration of comments, USTR strongly encourages commenters to make on-line submissions, using the www.regulations.gov website. Persons submitting a notification of intent to testify and/or written comments must do so in English and must identify (on the first page of the submission) the "U.S.-EU Trade Agreement."

To submit comments via www.regulations.gov, enter docket number USTR–2018–0035 on the home page and click ‘search.’ The site will provide a search-results page listing all documents associated with this docket. Find a reference to this notice and click on the link entitled ‘comment now!’ For further information on using the www.regulations.gov website, please consult the resources provided on the website by clicking on ‘How to Use This Site’ on the left side of the home page.

The www.regulations.gov website allows users to provide comments by filling in a ‘type comment’ field, or by attaching a document using an ‘upload file’ field. USTR prefers that you provide comments in an attached document. If a document is attached, it is sufficient to type ‘see attached’ in the ‘type comment’ field. USTR prefers submissions in Microsoft Word (.doc) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). If the submission is in an application other than those two, please indicate the name of the application in the ‘type comment’ field.

For any comments submitted electronically containing business confidential information, the file name of the business confidential version should begin with the characters ‘BC.’ Any page containing business confidential information must be clearly marked BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL on the top of that page. Filers of submissions containing business confidential information also must submit a public version of their comments. The file name of the public version should begin with the character ‘P.’ The ‘BC’ and ‘P’ should be followed by the name of the person or entity submitting the comments or reply comments. Filers submitting comments containing no business confidential information should name their file using the name of the person or entity submitting the comments.

Please do not attach separate cover letters to electronic submissions; rather, include any information that might appear in a cover letter in the comments themselves. Similarly, to the extent possible, please include any exhibits, annexes, or other attachments in the same file as the submission itself, not as separate files.

As noted, USTR strongly urges submitters to file comments through www.regulations.gov. You must make any alternative arrangements before transmitting a comment and in advance of the applicable deadline with Yvonne Jamison at (202) 395–3475.

USTR will place comments in the docket for public inspection, except business confidential information.

General information concerning USTR is available at www.ustr.gov.

Edward Gresser,

*Chair of the Trade Policy Staff Committee,
Office of the United States Trade Representative.*

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Results of the 2017/2018 Annual Generalized System of Preferences Review

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) is announcing the results of the 2016/2017 Annual Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Review with respect to: Products considered for addition to the list of eligible products for GSP; products considered for removal from the list of eligible products for certain beneficiary countries; decisions related to competitive need limitations (CNLs), including petitions for waivers of CNLs; and requests to reinstate/redesignate products previously excluded from GSP eligibility for certain countries.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Lauren Gamache, Director for GSP at (202) 395–2974 or lauren.m.gamache@ustr.eop.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A. Background

The GSP program provides for the duty-free treatment of designated articles when imported from beneficiary developing countries (BDCs). The GSP program is authorized by title V of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2461–2467), as amended, and is implemented in accordance with Executive Order 11888 of November 24, 1975, as modified by subsequent Executive Orders and Presidential Proclamations.

Each year, USTR leads the interagency Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) in reviewing the list of products eligible for GSP benefits. After completion of a process that includes public hearings, USTR provides recommendations to the President on appropriate actions based on statutory criteria, including exclusions from duty-free treatment of products from certain countries when they have reached the statutory CNL thresholds.

The GSP statute (19 U.S.C. 2463(c)(2)) establishes CNLs as a basis for

withdrawing duty-free treatment. The statute provides that when the President determines that a GSP beneficiary has exported to the United States during any calendar year a quantity of an eligible article that either is greater than a specified amount (\$180 million for 2017), or exceeds 50 percent of the appraised value of the total U.S. imports of that article, the President “shall, not later than November 1 of the next calendar year, terminate the duty-free treatment for that article” from that beneficiary, unless a waiver is granted.¹

The statute provides that the President may waive either CNL if, before November 1 of the calendar year following the year in which imports exceeded CNLs, the President (1) receives advice from the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) on whether any industry in the United States is “likely to be adversely affected by such waiver”; (2) determines, based on certain statutory considerations,² that such a waiver is in the national economic interest; and (3) publishes that determination in the **Federal Register**. The statute further provides that the President may disregard the 50 percent CNL if total imports of an article did not exceed a *de minimis* amount (\$23.5 million in 2017), or if the product was not produced in the United States in any of the three preceding calendar years.

As part of the 2017/2018 GSP Annual Review, the TPSC reviewed three types of actions related to the CNLs: (1) Whether to grant CNL waivers for products from certain countries, (2) whether to redesignate products from certain countries previously excluded from GSP eligibility based on CNLs; and (3) whether to grant *de minimis* CNL waivers for products from certain countries.

B. Results of the 2017/2018 Annual GSP Review

In the 2017/2018 Annual GSP Review, the TPSC reviewed (1) petitions to add nine products to the list of those eligible for duty-free treatment under GSP; (2) petitions to remove the GSP eligibility of two products; (3) petitions to waive CNLs for five products from beneficiary countries; (4) 92 products eligible for one-year *de minimis* waivers of CNLs; and (5) petitions to redesignate products previously excluded from GSP

¹ CNLs do not apply to least-developed or sub-Saharan African beneficiaries (19 U.S.C. 2463(c)(2)(D)).

² These include the general statutory considerations for granting duty-free treatment for any article from any beneficiary under 19 U.S.C. 2461, as well as the country eligibility criteria set forth in 19 U.S.C. 2462(c).