Announcements: April 25 - May 2, 2013

Ambassador Marantis Meets Chairperson Aung San Suu Kyi

Ambassador Marantis visits with Chairperson and General Secretary of the National League for Democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi

To read more on Ambassador Marantis' trip to Burma, please visit here for last week's blog.

USTR Releases Annual Special 301 Report on Intellectual Property Rights

May 1 - Acting U.S. Trade Representative Demetrios Marantis announced that the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) released its annual "Special 301" Report on the adequacy and effectiveness of U.S. trading partners’ protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR) and market access for persons that rely on IPR protection. Significant actions in this year's report include the following:

To read further please click here and to read the full report please click here.

Statement by Deputy U.S. Trade Representative and Ambassador to the World Trade Organization Michael Punke Regarding Today's

Statement by Deputy U.S. Trade Representative and Ambassador to the World Trade Organization Michael Punke Regarding Today's
Meeting of Senior Officials in Geneva, Switzerland

April 30 - Deputy U.S. Trade Representative and Ambassador to the World Trade Organization Michael Punke today issued the following statement with regard to the ongoing meetings of Senior Officials to discuss the future of negotiations toward an agreement at the 9th Ministerial Meeting of the WTO, set for Bali, Indonesia this December. Ambassador Punke is expressing these views of the United States to gathered senior officials throughout today’s meetings, which seek to advance talks toward a "small package" outcome at Bali.

To read further please click here.

Blog

Deputy USTR Miriam Sapiro Makes the Case for Transatlantic Free Trade Area

April 30 - Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Miriam Sapiro addressed an audience of business leaders, Congressional and Obama Administration staff, and members of the diplomatic community at a luncheon sponsored by the Meridian International Center and several partners. At the event entitled "The U.S.-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP): The Case for an Open Transatlantic Free Trade Area," Ambassador Sapiro spoke on the significance of the proposed TTIP agreement. Her remarks followed keynote addresses from the Honorable José Maria Aznar, former President of Spain, and James W. Cicconi, Senior Executive Vice President for External and Legislative Affairs of AT&T Services, Inc.

Ambassador Sapiro emphasized the ambitious negotiating agenda of the proposed TTIP talks, which includes seeking full elimination of tariffs, substantial progress on reducing regulatory and other non-tariff barriers, and disciplines that address emerging challenges for global trade, such as state-owned enterprises and localization barriers. Ambassador Sapiro stated that the timing is ripe for this agreement and suggested that there is high political will for a successful negotiation on both sides of the Atlantic. She also mentioned last month's formal notification by the Obama Administration to Congress of its intent to launch the TTIP negotiations and invited the audience to participate in the process through the Federal Register website, accessible here. Ambassador Sapiro concluded by recognizing the immensely successful economic relationship between the United States and the EU, and meeting with a delegation of visiting representatives from the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing.

Ambassador Marantis gave remarks at an event hosted by the Global Business Dialogue entitled: "Eleven Plus One: Japan's Bid to Join the TPP."

Ambassador Sapiro met with State Secretary Anne Ruth Herkes from the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology to discuss U.S.-Germany trade relations.

Assistant USTR for Europe and the Middle East Dan Mullaney gave remarks at an event hosted by the Meridian International Center to discuss the TTIP agreement.

Deputy Assistant USTR for North America Daniel Watson and Director for Steel Trade Policy Jean Kemp gave remarks at the Steel Manufacturers Association Annual Members Conference.

USTR released the annual "Special 301" Report on the adequacy and effectiveness of U.S. trading partners' protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR).

Ambassador Sapiro traveled with President Obama's delegation to Mexico City on May 2-3. The President's visit focused, in part, on ways to deepen the U.S.-Mexico economic and commercial partnership.

Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Intellectual Property and Innovation Stan McCoy participated in a panel discussion at the 2013 Spring Meeting of the American Intellectual Property Law Association in Seattle, WA.

Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Europe and the Middle East Dan Mullaney met with consumer and public interest groups regarding the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.
stated that the proposed Partnership can strengthen the contributions of trade and investment to job creation, growth, and competitiveness in both economies.

To learn more about the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, click here.

Assistant USTR Mark Linscott Speaks on TPP Negotiations and Future of Doha

April 26 - Assistant U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) for World Trade Organization (WTO) and Multilateral Affairs Mark Linscott spoke at an American Bar Association (ABA) conference session concerning the impact of free trade negotiations on future WTO rounds, along with representatives from Brazil and Canada. At the event, sponsored by the International Trade Committee of the ABA, Assistant USTR Linscott discussed the current state of the WTO Doha negotiations and implications of important regional initiatives.

During the panel discussion, Linscott provided a historical overview on multilateral trade negotiations in the WTO and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), noting that in the past, the system had proven flexible and dynamic in confronting challenges. He emphasized how critical it is for the WTO to deliver results at December's Ministerial Conference in Bali, Indonesia, in order to regain confidence in the ability of the WTO to negotiate agreements. Linscott also suggested that regional and plurilateral initiatives, such as the USTR-led negotiations on the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA), the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), should provide impetus to future WTO negotiations.

To learn more about USTR's involvement in the WTO, please visit the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Multilateral Affairs page here.

United States and Guatemala Sign Groundbreaking Agreement on Labor Rights Enforcement Plan

April 30 - Representatives of the United States and Guatemala signed a robust enforcement plan last week to resolve concerns raised in a labor case brought by the United States under the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). The two countries signed the agreement, announced on April 11, 2013, following a legal review of the text for accuracy, clarity, and consistency of translation. This is the first labor case that the United States has brought to dispute settlement under a trade agreement.

The 18-point Enforcement Plan is the result of extensive engagement and resolve by both governments. It includes concrete actions with specific time frames that Guatemala will implement within six months to improve labor law enforcement. Under the Enforcement Plan, Guatemala has committed to strengthen labor inspections, expedite and streamline the process of sanctioning employers and ordering remediation of labor violations, increase labor law compliance by exporting companies, improve the monitoring and enforcement of labor court orders, publish labor law enforcement information, and establish mechanisms to ensure that workers are paid what they are owed when factories close.

The labor case is suspended while the Enforcement Plan is being implemented.
Read more on the full Enforcement Plan [here](#), and visit this page for more information about U.S.-Guatemala trade relations.

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