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# DIGITALEUROPE urges WTO members to restore digital trade Moratorium after setback

Industry calls for urgent agreement in Geneva to avoid rising costs, uncertainty and fragmentation in the global digital economy

DIGITALEUROPE regrets that the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference, held in March in Yaoundé, Cameroon, ended without progress on a key industry priority: a permanent solution, or extension, for the Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions. As a consequence, the Moratorium, which since 1998 has been in force with global coverage and played an important role in facilitating a global digital society and economy, has now lapsed. This is a major setback, and it could have severe negative consequences, including increased costs, uncertainty and risks for the digital industry, which will likely lead to increased costs for consumers, reduced diversity of options on the market and a widening digital divide across societies.

WTO member states now have a chance to rectify this failure as they continue discussions on the Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions following the recent meeting in Geneva. We call on WTO members to agree on a long-lasting and stable solution to the Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions with a view towards making it permanent. While a permanent Moratorium would be the ideal scenario, we would also welcome a temporary solution that can restore the agreement, protect digital trade, and support growth, innovation and competitiveness. Such an outcome, even if limited in time, would also constitute a step forward for the WTO, reaffirming its role and safeguard the key function that the Moratorium plays in the digital economy.

## DIGITALEUROPE

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#### About DIGITALEUROPE

DIGITALEUROPE is the leading trade association representing digitally transforming industries in Europe. We stand for a regulatory and investment environment that enables European digitalising businesses across multiple sectors and citizens to prosper from digital technologies. We wish for Europe to grow, attract and sustain the world's best digital talents, investment and technology companies. Together with our members, we shape industry positions on all relevant policy matters, and contribute to their development and implementation. Our membership represents over 56,000 businesses who operate and invest in Europe. It includes corporations and scaleups who are global leaders in their field of activity, as well as national trade associations from across more than 30 European countries.

