



Facts on Global Reform

Office of the United States Trade Representative
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Temporary Entry of Service Suppliers (Mode 4)

Temporary Entry Issues in the WTO Negotiations

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is the first and only set of multilateral rules governing international trade in services. Negotiated in the Uruguay Round, it was developed in response to the huge growth of the services economy over the past 30 years and the greater potential for trading services brought about by the communications revolution.

The agreement covers all internationally-traded services: for example, banking, telecommunications, tourism, professional services, etc. It also defines four ways (or “modes”) of trading services. “Mode 4” refers to individuals temporarily traveling from their own country to supply services in another (e.g. highly skilled professionals or consultants), officially “presence of natural persons.”

U.S. Position

The U.S. recognizes the importance of Mode 4 services, both to our domestic industry and to our trading partners. Commitments made by the United States on Mode 4 services are among the best among all Members. U.S. Mode 4 commitments apply to all 110 subsectors, and cover:

- Services salespeople – with no numerical limitation
- Intracorporate transferees – with no numerical limitation
- Professionals and specialists – 65,000/year
- Persons engaged in establishment – with no numerical limitation

It is important to note that the U.S. commitments for professionals and specialists do not contain restraints based on sector or commercial presence. The commitments provide for an initial period of stay up to 3 years, which in practice may be renewed to a maximum of 6 years.

Given the quality and breadth of our existing commitments, and the high level of market access provided elsewhere in our revised offer, in comparison with the relatively low level of commitments made by most other Members, we do not find it necessary to further improve our Mode 4 commitments at this time.

Transparency

The United States has taken note of concerns raised by some Members about ease of access to information concerning U.S. policies and procedures for the temporary entry and stay of foreign service suppliers. We are currently developing an Internet-based resource that will bring together in one place the relevant information on laws, regulations, policies and procedures affecting services supplied through Mode 4.