



Negotiations of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the European Union and Tunisia.

The EU proposal on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) for the DCFTA EU-Tunisia

FACTSHEET

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The present document aims at providing a general overview of the European Union's (EU) proposal for a Chapter on technical barriers to trade (TBT) in the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) envisaged between the EU and Tunisia. The text of the EU proposal was presented to Tunisian experts in October 2015 and is now available on the website [link] of the European Commission.

What negotiations on TBTs are about

Products placed on the market have to comply with legal requirements set out by public authorities in areas such as health and safety, the protection of the environment, or the protection of citizen's privacy and security: for example, car brakes have to be reliable and effective; home appliances have to be energy-efficient and mobile telephones cannot interfere with each other.

Public authorities also establish the procedures which must be followed to assess the conformity of products with such requirements, such as factory evaluation, third-party evaluation of products or registration of products in a database managed by authorities.

When either technical requirements or the related conformity assessment procedures can obstruct trade, they are called '*technical barriers to trade*' (TBTs).

Though Tunisia and the EU pursue similar regulatory objectives relating to products placed on their markets, differences in approaches on how to establish requirements and on how to assess and enforce conformity – *often with a long history behind them* – create challenges and additional costs for manufacturers, importers and other businesses involved in trade.

The EU and Tunisia will look into ways to maintain or improve the way in which regulation of goods protects the rights of citizens and the environment while at the same time avoiding unnecessary barriers to trade.

Main goals

The EU proposal aims to:

- Ensure that technical requirements and rules for conformity assessment are based on international standards whenever possible.
- Ensure that technical regulations are prepared in an open and transparent way, with time and opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to be consulted during the drafting process and implementation of technical regulations.
- Assist Tunisia in reinforcing the effectiveness of its laboratories, certification bodies, market surveillance and other quality infrastructure.
- Moreover, in those areas where Tunisia wishes to, integrate Tunisia into the EU Internal Market for goods, through negotiations of an Agreement on Accreditation and Acceptance of Industrial products (ACAA).

Recommended approach

The EU and Tunisia would conduct studies and consultations in order to identify sectors and products that have great potential in terms of trade between the two parties.