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Our ref. Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership
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Mr. Douglas Bell
Chair, Trade Policy Staff Committee
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20508
USA

Contact person: Mr. Sean Mac Curtain
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Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership

Dear Mr. Bell,

This joint letter is from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) (see attached Annex). These four organizations work together with the aim of providing a common confidence-building foundation for exchanging goods and services in the global market.

We are writing concerning the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Agreement that is currently being negotiated between the United States of America and the European Union. We believe that any future trade agreement should make reference to international standards and conformity assessment systems, and should encourage international accreditation mechanisms to provide an efficient basis for conformity assessment to these standards.

With well-established and respected processes for the development of international standards, conformity assessment systems and established Mutual and Multilateral recognition agreements, our organizations can give confidence to the regulators of both the United States of America and Europe that products, services, systems and processes meet specified requirements.

Economic studies have clearly shown that having efficient and effective standards and conformity infrastructure in place is a significant enabler of trade and therefore of economic growth. Use of such voluntary infrastructures by industry and regulators alike has been proven to bring substantial benefits

At another level, while tariffs between Europe and the United States are already low, technical barriers to trade are a factor. The use of international standards and conformity assessment can encourage greater trade in goods and services and be a benchmark for the rest of the World who are also major traders with both of the parties to this trade negotiation

More detailed information on each of the organizations signing this letter is provided as an Annex. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss any of the points raised in this letter and to answer any questions that you may have.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Steele
ISO Secretary General



Frans Vreeswijk
IEC General Secretary & CEO



Pete Unger
ILAC Chair



Randy Dougherty
IAF President



Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership

ANNEX

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

ISO has a membership of 164 national standards bodies from countries large and small, industrialized, developing and in transition, in all regions of the world. ISO's portfolio of over 19,000 standards provides business, government and society with practical tools for all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social. An ISO International Standard represents a global consensus on the state of the art in the subject of that standard. The ISO member body in the United States of America is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) based in Washington DC.

ISO's Conformity Assessment Committee (CASCO) together with IEC has produced 27 conformity assessment standards to help make these activities as uniform as possible. These standards, adopted globally, explain what a conformity assessment body needs to do to be seen as competent and capable of performing conformity assessments such as laboratory testing, inspection or management system or product certification. The benefits of harmonizing conformity assessment activities are numerous. Among other things, it helps facilitate global trade via the acceptance of certificates of conformance. Harmonized conformity assessment allows for the mutual acceptance of test results and product and management system certification helps raise confidence and therefore facilitates the movement of goods across national borders.

More information on ISO and CASCO is available from www.iso.org.

International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

The IEC is the global organization that publishes International Standards for the majority of electrical and electronic components, devices and systems used in homes, offices, healthcare facilities, factories, public spaces, both in developed and developing countries around the world. The IEC is also the key partner for all actors of the energy sector, providing the majority of International technical Standards for power generation, transmission and distribution, including for Smart Grids and Cities.

The IEC comprises 164 countries, 82 of which are Members from developed countries and 82 developing countries, which participate free of charge in the IEC Affiliate Country Programme. Together they represent 98% of world population and 96% of the world's electric energy production. IEC International Standards allows millions of components, devices and systems that use or produce electricity or contain electronics to work safely with each other everywhere in the world and supports all forms of conformity assessment. An IEC International Standard represents a global consensus on the state of the art in the subject of that standard. More information on IEC can be found at www.iec.ch.

The IEC is unique in that it also administers third party conformity assessment systems that bring together thousands of testing laboratories and certification bodies and are accepted and used by nearly all countries in the world. These systems operate conformity assessment schemes covering products, components, services and persons. It is the largest working multilateral agreement based on one-time testing of products and international certification. They have issued over 1 million certificates to date.

International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)

Operating in the public interest across all market sectors, accreditation determines the technical competence, impartiality, reliability and integrity of conformity assessment bodies. Accreditation works through a process of transparent and impartial evaluation of these organizations against internationally recognized standards and other requirements.

The primary purpose of both IAF (www.iaf.nu) and ILAC (www.ilac.org) is to establish multilateral arrangements between their member accreditation bodies based on mutual evaluation and acceptance of each other's accreditation systems. These arrangements enhance the acceptance of products and services across national borders by removing the need for them to undergo additional tests, checks or certification for at each country of entry. This helps to reduce bureaucracy and the costs to businesses and contributes to operational efficiency.

These arrangements between national accreditation bodies have helped make accreditation an internationally-recognized 'stamp of approval' to demonstrate compliance against agreed standards and



requirements. These arrangements provide governments and regulators with a credible and robust framework on which to further develop and enhance government-to-government bilateral and multilateral international trade agreements.

Accreditation therefore acts as a catalyst to national economies in two ways - by helping domestic companies pitch for business abroad and by promoting confidence in imports from other countries.