

Participation in WTO plurilateral talks

APRIL 12, 2024 | Published [here](#)

Plurilaterals in the WTO (work among only some members, not the whole membership) are not easy to follow. Some information is publicly available but a lot is confidential. Some of what is available publicly is incomplete, including the identities of the countries participating in the work.

As this piece was being written, a useful new tool was published, the independent “[WTO Plurilaterals](#)” website, created by the Geneva Trade Platform. This technical note has therefore been updated to include the website’s information.

Finding out how many countries are participating in the **plurilateral** talks is not straightforward. In some cases there are official lists. For others some detective work is needed.

The [bottom line](#): **152** WTO members (93% of the membership) are participating in at least one plurilateral discussion, **12** (7%) are not.

Clearly participation is fluid, and this note has taken some time to compile. It ought to be straightforward, and non-controversial, for lists to be made public and updated routinely. After this page was first created, the WTO website started posting complete lists of participants. That is now the main source of information used, but that was not always the case previously.

The starting point for identifying participants is “joint statements” issued at the 2017 Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference (in the [WT/MIN\(17\)/*](#) series) – which is why these talks are officially called **joint-statement initiatives (JSIs)**. In some cases, new lists are circulated as official documents, although they are not always kept up-to-date.

Then come countries’ announcements that they are joining the talks. Some are public documents, others are secret (“restricted”), and in some cases no official announcement is made at all.

And then there are WTO web pages (now the main source) and website news stories.

The numbers that appear here are the ones that have been confirmed in official WTO lists. Participants that have not been announced publicly may have slipped through the net. (Previously they were supplemented by information on the independent [WTO Plurilaterals](#) website, which was needed as a reliable backup.)

Finally, the numbers are further complicated by how the EU and its member states are counted. They are 28 WTO members (the EU plus 27 member states, or 28 up to 2019 before the UK left). But for obscure internal legal reasons, the EU sometimes insists on being counted as 27, the number of its member states. That then raises the question of whether the full WTO membership is 164 or 163.

In this note, the EU is always counted as 28 (or 29 before the UK left). If the EU alone is listed, 27 (or 28 pre-Brexit) is added to the total.

These are the figures for the eight subjects currently being negotiated or discussed as “joint-statement initiatives” (JSIs), the first five launched at the 2017 Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference and the other three launched at the originally scheduled time of the 2021 Geneva Ministerial Conference (November 30 to December 3 2021, now postponed). Sources for the numbers are below:

From 2017 (Buenos Aires)

- E-commerce and digital trade – **90**
- Domestic regulation in services – **71**
- Investment facilitation for development – **128**
- Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) – **99**
- Gender equality and women in trade – **“128”**

From 2021 (Geneva)

- Trade and environmental sustainability structured discussions – **76**
- Plastics: informal dialogue on plastic pollution and environmentally sustainable trade – **76**
- Fossil fuel subsidies – **48**

See also the [participants' list in the multi-party interim appeal arbitration arrangement \(MPIA\)](#), not a joint-statement initiative, but a plurilateral agreement for appealing in dispute settlement when the Appellate Body is not functioning

How many in total? 152

Based on all of this, the full list of participants in WTO plurilateral talks is (at least): **152** (93%):

February 26, 2024

Afghanistan; Albania; Angola; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Armenia; Australia; Austria; Bahrain; Barbados; Belgium; Belize; Benin; Bolivia; Botswana; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Canada; Central African Republic; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Dem. Rep. Congo; Congo; Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Djibouti; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Estonia; Eswatini; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; Gabon; Gambia; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Iceland; Indonesia; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Rep. Korea; Kuwait; Kyrgyz Republic; Laos; Latvia; Lesotho; Liberia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macao, China; Madagascar; Malawi; Malaysia; Maldives; Mali; Malta; Mauritania; Mauritius; Mexico; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Myanmar; Namibia; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Oman; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Romania; Russia; Rwanda; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Samoa; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Solomon Islands; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; Tajikistan; Thailand; Togo; Tonga; Trinidad and Tobago; Turkey; Uganda; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay; Vanuatu; Venezuela; Vietnam; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe (**152**)

Sources [are here](#)

Not participating in plurilaterals: 15 (9%)

February 26, 2024

Bangladesh, Cuba, Egypt, Ghana, India, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Tunisia (**12**)

Sources [are here](#)

FROM 2017 (Buenos Aires)

E-commerce: 90

Not the EU, but its member states participate

2017 ministerial statement: [WT/MIN\(17\)/60](#) and [WT/MIN\(17\)/60/Add.1](#) (adding Thailand)

Additional documents on new participants: included in [this search result](#)

WTO website [official page](#): 90 (accessed October 31, 2023)

WTO website news latest: 90 ([October 27, 2023](#))

WTO website [news archive](#)

See also [this in a nutshell](#)

Albania; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Bahrain, Kingdom of; Belgium; Benin; Brazil; Brunei; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Cyprus; Czechia; Denmark; Ecuador; El Salvador; Estonia; Finland; France; Gambia; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Guatemala; Honduras; Hong Kong; Hungary; Iceland; Indonesia; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Rep. Korea; Kuwait; Kyrgyz Republic; Laos; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malaysia; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Myanmar; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Oman; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Romania; Russia; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Taiwan; Thailand; Türkiye; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay (**90**)

Sources [are here](#)

Domestic regulation in services: 71

Including EU + member states ("The European Union presented one schedule for its member states")

WTO website [main page](#): 71, including Timor-Leste (accessed February 13, 2024)

List of schedules of 68 commitments [INF/SDR/3/Rev.1](#) (December 2, 2021)

Additional participants (Georgia and UAE) [WT/L/1129/Add.1](#) (June 13, 2022)

WTO website news: 70 ([December 20, 2022](#))

WTO website [news archive](#)

See also [this in a nutshell](#), the independent [WTO Plurilaterals website's list](#)

February 13, 2024

Albania; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Bahrain; Belgium; Brazil; Bulgaria; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czechia; Denmark; El Salvador; Estonia; European Union; Finland; France; Georgia*; Germany; Greece; Hong Kong, China; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Rep. Korea; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; Timor-Leste**; Türkiye; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates*; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay (**71**)

* Joined [June 2022](#) | **An observer about to join the WTO
Sources [are here](#).

Investment facilitation: 128

Not US

WTO page on [investment facilitation](#) (accessed March 22, 2024) **(127)**

2024 [Draft Ministerial Declaration](#) (February 25, 2024, revised February 29, 2024) (124), and WTO website news story (March 19, 2024) (125)

Previous official lists (December 10, 2021) [WT/L/1130](#) (111): [WT/L/1072/Rev.1](#) 2019

Additional documents on new participants since 2019: [INF/IFD/W/36](#) (Peru, July 2021), [INF/IFD/W/20](#) (Mauritius, June 2020), [INF/IFD/W/14](#) (Philippines, Feb 2020), [INF/IFD/W/49](#) (Oman, April 2023), [INF/IFD/W/53](#) (Armenia, December 2023)

Mali joined in December 2023

WTO news story [February 25, 2024](#) (123, “three quarters of members”)

WTO website [news archive](#)

See also [this in a nutshell](#), the independent [WTO Plurilaterals website's list](#)

March 22, 2024

Afghanistan; Albania; Angola; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Armenia; Australia; Austria; Bahrain; Barbados; Belgium; Belize; Benin; Bolivia; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Cameroon; Canada; Central African Republic; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Congo; Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Democratic Republic Congo; Djibouti; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Estonia; European Union; Finland; France; Gabon; Gambia; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Honduras; Hong Kong; Hungary; Iceland; Indonesia; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Rep. Korea; Kuwait; Kyrgyz Republic; Laos; Latvia; Liberia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macao; Malawi; Malaysia; Maldives; Mali; Malta; Mauritania; Mauritius; Mexico; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Myanmar; Netherlands; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Niger; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Oman; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Romania; Russia; Saudi Arabia; Seychelles; Sierra Leone; Singapore; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; Solomon Islands; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Switzerland; Taiwan; Tajikistan; Thailand; Togo; Tonga; Uganda; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; Uruguay; Vanuatu; Venezuela; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe **(128)**

(As listed in the [revised draft 2024 Ministerial Declaration](#) and the [WTO web page on investment facilitation](#) (accessed March 22, 2024). Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Dem. Rep. Congo, Venezuela and Tonga joined most recently. Colombia and Taiwan were restored to the list. Earlier, Ghana, Pakistan and Türkiye dropped out)

Sources [are here](#)

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs): 99

MSME WORKING GROUP (2022), DRAFT STATEMENT (2021)

WTO website [main page](#) (accessed February 13, 2024) (citing [INF/MSME/2/Rev.11](#)) and [news story](#) (March 19, 2024, adding Democratic Republic of Congo)

2021 ministerial statement (draft) [WT/MIN\(21\)/1](#) (October 27, 2021) (94)

See also: **2017 ministerial statement**: [WT/MIN\(17\)/58](#) and revision [WT/MIN\(17\)/58/Rev.1](#) (adding Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana and Nigeria), latest update (97)

Latest working group list (January 14, 2022) [INF/MSME/2/Rev.6](#)

WTO website [MSMEs page](#)

See also [this in a nutshell](#), the independent [WTO Plurilaterals website](#)

March 19, 2024

Afghanistan; Albania; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Armenia; Australia; Bahrain; Barbados; Belize; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic Congo; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; European Union; The Gambia; Georgia; Grenada; Guatemala; Guyana; Honduras; Hong Kong; Iceland; Israel; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Rep. Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Laos; Liechtenstein; Macao; Malaysia; Mexico; Moldova, Republic of; Mongolia; Montenegro; Myanmar; New Zealand; Nicaragua; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Pakistan; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Qatar; Russian Federation; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Saudi Arabia; Singapore; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei; Tajikistan; Türkiye; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay; Vietnam (72+27=99)

Sources [are here](#)

Gender equality and women in trade: “128”

“128” in May 2023 in the [latest material](#) on the WTO website, although a list of participants is not available. 116 in the **2021 declaration**, but 119 in 2017. Apparently not the US

WTO website [main page](#)

2017 ministerial declaration [WTO website news](#) (lists 118 including EU member states but not the EU itself – 119 if both included)

2021 ministerial declaration [WT/MIN\(21\)/4](#) (lists 89 including the EU but not its member states – 116 if all included)

Dropping out: China, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Panama, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tunisia

Joining: Angola, Botswana, Georgia, Maldives, Trinidad and Tobago, UAE.

WTO website [news story, June 12, 2022](#) – on a statement by three co-chairs at the Ministerial Conference – refers to “more than 120 members” participating without listing them

WTO website [news archive](#)

See also

· [this in a nutshell](#)

· the independent [WTO Plurilaterals website](#)'s list, which is not based on the 2021 declaration. It adds six WTO members – Afghanistan, Botswana, China, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and Panama – and seven WTO observers Andorra, Bahamas, Belarus, Ethiopia, Serbia, Somalia, and Sudan

2021 ministerial declaration:

November 10, 2021 (Ministerial Declaration)

(The [WTO website](#) says **128** in May 2023 without listing participants)

February 13, 2024

Afghanistan; Albania; Angola; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Barbados; Belgium; Benin; Botswana; Brazil; Bulgaria; Burundi; Cambodia; Canada; Chad; Chile; Colombia; Congo, Dem. Rep.; Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Denmark; Dominica; Dominican Rep.; Ecuador; El Salvador; Estonia; Eswatini; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; Gabon; Gambia; Germany; Georgia; Greece; Grenada; Guatemala; Guinea; Guinea Bissau; Guyana; Haiti; Honduras; Hungary; Iceland; Indonesia; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Jamaica; Japan; Kenya; Korea, Rep.; Kyrgyz Rep.; Laos; Latvia; Lesotho; Liberia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Madagascar; Malawi; Malaysia; Maldives; Mali; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Myanmar; Namibia; Netherlands; New Zealand; Niger; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russia; Rwanda; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Samoa; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Taiwan; Tajikistan; Togo; Tonga; Trinidad and Tobago; Türkiye; Uganda; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom; Uruguay; Vanuatu; Vietnam; Zambia (**116**)

Sources [are here](#)

ADDED: 2021 (Geneva)

These were launched on December 15. Originally intended for the Geneva Ministerial Conference, scheduled for November 30–December 3 and then postponed. The launch went ahead anyway.

(The conference took place on June 12–17, 2022)

Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions: 76

(TESSD):

Participants' list on [WTO website TESSD page](#)

2021 ministerial statement [WT/MIN\(21\)/6/Rev.2](#) (December 14, 2021 – 71 members listed)

WTO news story [July 11, 2023](#)

WTO website [news archive](#)

WTO website [main page](#)

See also [this in a nutshell](#), the independent [WTO Plurilaterals website](#)

January 25, 2024

Albania; Australia; Austria; Bahrain; **Barbados**; Belgium; **Brazil**; Bulgaria; Cabo Verde; Canada; Chad; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czechia; Denmark; Ecuador; Estonia; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; Gambia; Germany; Greece; Honduras; Hong Kong; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Israel; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Rep Korea; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Macao; Maldives; Malta; Mexico; Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; New Zealand; North Macedonia; Norway; Panama; **Peru**; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russia; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Singapore; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Suriname; Sweden; Switzerland; Taiwan; **Tajikistan**; Türkiye; Ukraine; **United Arab Emirates**; United Kingdom; United States; Uruguay; Vanuatu (**76**)

Countries in **bold** joined after the December 14, 2021 Ministerial joint-statement

Sources [are here](#)

Plastics: (Informal) Dialogue on plastic pollution and environmentally sustainable plastics trade: 79

(DDP, previously IDP))

WTO website (accessed April 12, 2024) [main page](#)

2021 ministerial statement [WT/MIN\(21\)/8/Rev.2](#) (December 10, 2021)

WTO news story [December 15, 2021](#)

WTO website [news archives](#)

WTO documents [INF/TE/IDP/*](#)

See also [this in a nutshell](#), the independent [WTO Plurilaterals website](#)

April 12, 2024

Albania, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, European Union, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Rep. Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macao, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia; Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu **(79)**

Sources [are here](#)

Fossil fuel subsidies: 48

WTO website [Fossil fuel subsidy reform webpage](#) (accessed July 14, 2023, lists 48 participants)

WTO website [news stories](#)

See also [this in a nutshell](#)

2021 ministerial statement [WT/MIN\(21\)/9/Rev.1](#) (December 14, 2021, lists 45 participants)

See also: the independent [WTO Plurilaterals website](#)

July 14, 2023

Albania; Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Cyprus; Czechia; Denmark; Estonia; European Union; Fiji; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Mali; Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; New Zealand; North Macedonia; Norway; Panama; Paraguay; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Samoa; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Tonga; United Kingdom; Uruguay; Vanuatu **(48)**

Sources [are here](#)