



## Treaties Committee supports TRIPS Protocol

Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee has given the go ahead to the Protocol amending the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Agreement, which aims to provide the world's poorest people with better access to medicines. The Protocol permits WTO Members with insufficient manufacturing capacity to import patented pharmaceuticals made under a compulsory licence from other Member countries in specific circumstances.

The Committee also urged the Government to follow acceptance of the Protocol with amendments to the *Patents Act 1990* (Cth) to allow for compulsory licensing to enable export of cheaper versions of patented medicines needed to address public health problems to least-developed and developing countries.

In Report 86, the Committee also supported eight other treaties:

- a multilateral agreement concerning standards for wheeled vehicles;
- an agreement with South Africa concerning scientific and technological cooperation;
- amendments to the International Telecommunication Union Constitution & Convention;
- the adoption of an additional distinctive emblem for the Red Cross/Crescent;
- a supplementary agreement with Germany for Social Security;
- an agreement with the Republic of Korea for Social Security;
- amendments to the Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement; and
- an agreement with Turkey for cooperation in military fields.

In Report 87, the Committee supported seven treaties:

- an agreement with Thailand for mutual assistance in criminal matters;
- an agreement with Belgium for health care insurance;
- agreements with Antigua and Barbuda for the exchange of Information with respect to taxes, and with the Netherlands in respect of the Netherlands Antilles;
- an agreement with the European Police Office (Europol) on operational and strategic cooperation;
- an amendment to the Hong Kong Extradition Treaty;
- an extension of the Agreement in relation to the functioning of the Australian Patent Office as an International Searching Authority and International Preliminary Examining Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty; and
- a multilateral agreement for the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments.

Reports 86 and 87 are both available on the Committee's website:

[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm) or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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