
China regrets over WTO appeal ruling on publication imports

BEIJING, Dec. 22 (Xinhua) -- China's Ministry of Commerce (MOC) Tuesday expressed regret over the loss of China's appeal against a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling that its control over imported publications violated trade commitments.

The characteristics of cultural products, which featured both commercial and cultural value, determined that they should be managed differently to other imports, Yao Jian, spokesman of the MOC, said in an online statement.

The statement did not give any indication as to the Chinese government's next move.

The WTO's top arbitration body Monday upheld a previous panel ruling against Chinese regulations on the import and distribution of books and audio-visual products, saying the Chinese regulations failed to comply with world trade rules.

China lodged an appeal against the panel ruling on Sept. 22, after the arbitration body issued a ruling on the U.S.-China dispute in August, in which the United States accused China of not providing enough access for imports of publications and audio-visual products.

Like the WTO expert panel report issued on Aug. 12, the Appellate Body report issued Monday largely supported the U.S. allegations.

It called on China to revise its import regulations so as to bring them in line with WTO rules.

In China, the imports of publications and audio-visual products must be approved by the relevant authorities and state-owned companies were authorized to manage the imports of such products.

China had imported approximately 500,000 publication titles of all kinds every year since joining the WTO in 2001, as promised in its entry agreement, according to the Chinese Commerce Ministry.

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