(b) after the expiration of the time period referred to in paragraph 3, if the responding Party does not provide written comments within that period.

5. The consultations may be held through meetings in person or by electronic means. Each Party shall appoint an official responsible for conducting the meetings.

6. During the consultations the Parties shall explore in good faith a possible satisfactory solution to address the concerns of the requesting Party, including proposals for an adjustment of the regulatory measure at issue or for the adoption of a less trade or investment restrictive regulatory measure, where relevant.

7. The Parties shall not be required to disclose confidential or sensitive information or data.

8. A report on the outcome of the consultations shall be prepared by the requesting Party in consultation with the responding Party. The contact point of the requesting Party shall send the report to the Committee on Regulatory Cooperation for its consideration.

9. The request referred to in paragraph 2 may also be submitted in cases where no satisfactory solution has been reached at the level of the relevant specialised committee and is without prejudice to the Parties' rights and obligations under Chapter 22 or under the dispute settlement procedure of any other applicable agreement.

10. The request referred to in paragraph 2 shall not require the responding Party to achieve a particular regulatory outcome and shall not delay the adoption of a regulatory measure.

SECTION B

Animal welfare

ARTICLE 18.17

Animal welfare

1. The Parties will cooperate for their mutual benefit on matters of animal welfare with a focus on farmed animals with a view to improving the mutual understanding of their respective laws and regulations.

2. For that purpose, the Parties may adopt by mutual consent a working plan defining the priorities and categories of animals to be dealt with under this Article, and establish an Animal Welfare Technical Working Group to exchange information, expertise and experiences in the field of animal welfare and to explore the possibility of promoting further cooperation.

SECTION C

Final provisions

ARTICLE 18.18

Application of Section A

1. The provisions of Section A do not apply to Section B and to the regulatory cooperation in financial services provided for in Sub-Section 5 of Section E of Chapter 8.

2. Notwithstanding Article 18.3, any specific provisions in other Chapters of this Agreement shall prevail over the provisions of Section A to the extent necessary for the application of the specific provisions.