

**PRIORITIES
DURING THE ICELANDIC EFTA COUNCIL CHAIR**

Second half of 2012

The Icelandic Chair bases its priorities for the second half of 2012 on the conclusions of the EFTA Council meeting at Ministerial level in Gstaad on 28 June 2012.

1. Internal EFTA affairs

- Continue to adapt the Vaduz Convention (EFTA Convention) and its annexes to changing needs
- Implement the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products recently adopted by the Council
- Further develop Member States' common basis for future free trade negotiations

2. Third-country relations

Existing free trade agreements:

- Albania, Peru, Serbia: Consider holding joint committee meetings
- Canada: Prepare for and, if possible, start negotiations on an expansion of the free trade agreement
- Continue to work on the maintenance and development of EFTA's free trade agreements, notably with Chile, Israel, Jordan, Korea and SACU
- Colombia, Gulf Cooperation Council, Hong Kong, Montenegro: Work towards the entry into force of the respective free trade agreements for all Member States

Ongoing free trade negotiations:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Conclude the negotiations and sign the free trade agreement
- India: Achieve further progress and, if possible, conclude the negotiations
- Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan: Move forward substantively in the negotiating process
- Indonesia: Make substantive headway in the negotiations
- Central American States: Pursue and, if possible, conclude the negotiations
- Vietnam: Continue the negotiating process with a view to making substantive advances

- Thailand: Work towards the resumption of the negotiations at the first suitable opportunity
- Algeria: Continue to monitor developments and, if possible and appropriate, resume negotiations

New free trade negotiations and potential partners:

- Malaysia: Finalise the scoping exercise and launch negotiations at the first suitable opportunity
- Philippines: Explore deeper trade relations and examine the feasibility of a free trade agreement
- MERCOSUR: Further examine opportunities to strengthen trade relations and hold a meeting of the Joint Committee established under the Joint Declaration with a view to further examine opportunities to strengthen trade relations
- Pakistan: Prepare and sign a joint declaration on cooperation
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Further examine the possibilities of developing closer trade relations with potential partners

3. Other activities

- Continue exchanging views on ongoing bilateral free trade negotiations by individual EFTA Member States
- Follow closely developments with regard to EFTA Member States' bilateral relations with the European Union, including the application by Iceland to join the EU
- Exchange views on developments with respect to international economic and trade negotiations