

PRIORITIES DURING THE ICELANDIC EFTA COUNCIL CHAIR

First half 2010

The Icelandic chair bases its priorities during the first half of 2010 on the conclusions of the EFTA Council at Ministerial level held on 17 December 2009 in Geneva.

I. EFTA internal relations

- Continue to adapt the Vaduz Convention (EFTA Convention) and its annexes to changing needs.
- Carry on the work of the Working Group on Trade and Environment and the Working Group on Labour Standards in EFTA Free Trade Agreements with a view to contributing to international developments in these fields, and report to Ministers at their meeting in June 2010.
- Further develop Member States' common basis for future free trade negotiations.
- Commemorate EFTA's 50 years anniversary.

II. Third Country Relations

Existing Free Trade Agreements:

Canada, Korea, Mexico, Singapore: Hold Joint Committee meetings.

Israel: Hold a meeting of agricultural experts with the aim of revising the bilateral agricultural agreements and Protocol A (Processed Agricultural Products).

Concluded free trade negotiations:

Albania: Work towards the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement.

Colombia: Work towards the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Work towards the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement.

Peru: Aim at signing the concluded Free Trade Agreement.

Serbia: Work towards the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement.

Ongoing Free Trade Negotiations

India: Hold two rounds of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement.

Ukraine: Hold one or two rounds and conclude negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement.

Hong Kong: Hold two rounds of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement.

Algeria: Monitor the possibility of resuming the free trade negotiations.

Thailand: Monitor the possibility of resuming the free trade negotiations.

Prospective free trade negotiations and future potential partners:

Russia: Finalize the preparatory work and open negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement.

Indonesia: Launch free trade negotiations.

Malaysia: Sign a Joint Declaration on Cooperation in view of possible future free trade negotiations.

Vietnam: Establish a Joint Study Group and start assessing the feasibility of a Free Trade Agreement.

Panama: Sign a Joint Declaration on Cooperation.

Other potential partners: Continue to monitor developments.

III. Other activities

- Continue exchanging views on ongoing bilateral free trade negotiations by individual EFTA Member States.
- Follow closely developments regarding Iceland's application/negotiations for membership to the European Union.
- Continue exchanges of views among EFTA States on the ongoing negotiations in the WTO.
- Participate in the transparency mechanism under the WTO's Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA) with respect to EFTA's Free Trade Agreements.