

**PRIORITIES
DURING THE NORWEGIAN EFTA COUNCIL CHAIR**

Second half 2015

1. Relations amongst EFTA countries

- Continue to update the Vaduz Convention (EFTA Convention) and its annexes in light of evolving needs of the EFTA States and in order to reflect common developments under the EEA Agreement and the Swiss bilateral agreements with the European Union.
- Further develop Member States' common basis for future free trade negotiations.

2. Third-country relations

Ongoing FTA negotiations

- *India*: resume negotiations with a view to concluding the process expeditiously.
- *Indonesia*: resume negotiations at the earliest opportunity.
- *Malaysia*: hold the fifth round of negotiations.
- *Philippines, Vietnam*: hold two negotiating rounds.
- *Georgia*: start and make substantive progress in the negotiations.

Management and development of existing FTAs

- *Turkey*: conclude negotiations on a substantive expansion of the agreement.
- *Canada and Mexico*: conduct exploratory processes in view of a possible start of negotiations on a substantive expansion of the free trade agreements.
- Continue work on the maintenance and possible further development of other existing free trade agreements.

Negotiations on hold

- *Algeria, Thailand, and Russia/Belarus/Kazakhstan*: monitor developments.

Potential partners and other activities

- *Mercosur*: continue the exploratory dialogue with the *Mercosur* States.
- *ASEAN*: continue exploring the possibility of establishing relations with ASEAN as a group.
- *Ecuador*: pursue the aim to start negotiations on a free trade agreement in the course of next year.

- *Sub-Saharan Africa*: continue exploring the possibilities of developing closer relations with free trade associations, such as the East African Community, and with individual countries.
- *Australia*: examine the possibilities to develop closer trade relations.

3. Other activities

- Develop the scope of the trade policy dialogue with the USTR with a view to examining ways of strengthening trade relations between EFTA and the USA in the context of the ongoing Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations, and continue the dialogue with the EU.
 - Follow developments with respect to international and trade negotiations, in particular the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Development Agenda, the plurilateral initiatives (TISA, EGA and ITA) as well as the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.
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