

PRIORITIES
DURING THE ICELANDIC EFTA COUNCIL CHAIR

First half of 2018

1. Relations amongst EFTA countries

- Continue to adapt the EFTA Convention and its annexes to changing needs
- Examining the feasibility of adding references to gender equality considerations to EFTA free trade agreements
- Examine the feasibility of a review of the model chapter on Trade and Sustainable Development in EFTA's free trade agreements

2. Third-country relations

Ongoing FTA negotiations

- Ecuador: after finalisation of negotiations, work towards a timely signing of the Free Trade Agreement
- India, Indonesia, Malaysia: continue negotiations with a view to concluding the processes in 2018
- Mercosur, Vietnam: continue negotiations with a view to making substantive progress

Management and development of existing FTAs

- Mexico: continue negotiations on the modernisation of the existing Free Trade Agreement
- Turkey: solve outstanding technical issues with a view to signing the agreement as soon as possible
- Canada: continue the exploration on the possible modernisation of the existing Free Trade Agreement
- Southern African Customs Union: Start negotiations on updating and improving the existing FTAs
- Chile: Aim to start negotiations regarding the modernisation of the existing agreement.
- Continue work on the update and possible further development of other existing FTAs, such as Korea and Israel

Negotiations on hold

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

3. Brexit and Relations with the United Kingdom

- Continue the exchange of information on work related to Brexit and the consultations at senior official's level on implications for EFTA Member States

4. Other activities

- East African Community: continue negotiations on a Joint Declaration on Cooperation with a view to concluding in 2018
 - Pakistan: follow-up on the 1st meeting of the Joint Committee held in October 2017
 - ASEAN: sound out the readiness of ASEAN to enter into formal relations with EFTA, e.g. by signing a Joint Declaration on Cooperation
 - Continue the trade policy dialogue with the US
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