

DECLARATION

by

THE EFTA STATES

and

THE GCC COUNTRIES

EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

DECLARATION

The Member States of the European Free Trade Association, the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kingdom of Norway and the Swiss Confederation, hereinafter referred to as "the EFTA States"

of the one part, and

The Governments of the countries parties to the Charter of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, the State of the United Arab Emirates, the State of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait, hereinafter referred to as "the GCC Countries"

of the other part,

Considering the importance of existing links between the EFTA States and the GCC Countries,

Inspired by basic principles of human rights and the common objective of fostering human and economic contacts across borders,

Recognising the EFTA States' and the GCC Countries' desire to strengthen their economic co-operation and trade relations,

Noting the intention and efforts of the EFTA States and the GCC Countries to make a dynamic and independent contribution to improve global economic conditions, thus strengthening the integration of their economies in the world economy,

Considering the importance of the Middle East peace process and conscious of the need to associate their efforts to strengthen security, political stability and economic development in the region,

Determined to promote, expand and diversify trade and economic relations, based on the principles and rules of the WTO, thus creating the basis for further co-operation and an environment conducive to foreign direct investment,

Determined to make all efforts to develop relations between the EFTA States and the GCC Countries, which may eventually lead to the establishment of a free trade area,

Hereby declare the following:

I OBJECTIVES

1. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries shall, within their respective frameworks, seek to deepen and extend their co-operation. This includes taking relevant steps towards the establishment of a legal and economic environment conducive to, and supportive of, private entrepreneurship and economic activity based on market forces.

II TRADE

2. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries shall examine concrete ways and means of expanding and liberalising their trade relations taking into account their international obligations and the principles and provisions of the WTO.

3. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries shall seek to create conditions favourable to the expansion of trade, *inter alia*, by

- facilitating exchange of information on foreign trade,
- removing barriers to trade,
- developing customs and tariff co-operation.

4. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries shall seek to broaden co-operation in order to liberalise their trade, *inter alia*, by

- facilitating an exchange of views on conditions for free and undistorted competition,
- exchanging information in the field of services,
- encouraging co-operation in the area of intellectual property rights.

5. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries shall encourage and stimulate business contacts, notably between enterprises and organisations concerned with foreign trade, with the aim of developing their mutual trade.

III FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE RELATIONS

6. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries shall, when conditions permit, negotiate a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), taking into account the provisions of the WTO.

IV PRIVATE SECTOR CO-OPERATION AND INVESTMENT

7. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries declare their desire to improve conditions for the implementation of private sector industrial co-operation projects, *inter alia* by creating favourable conditions conducive to capital flows and investment in all economic sectors of mutual concern.

V JOINT COMMITTEE

8. The EFTA States and the GCC Countries hereby establish a Joint Committee.

9. The Joint Committee shall review the co-operation in areas referred to in the present Declaration and shall discuss any other issue of mutual interest. The Joint Committee shall formulate appropriate recommendations on any co-operation between the EFTA States and the GCC Countries.

10. The Joint Committee shall meet on a regular basis, as and when necessary, at a level to be decided from time to time.

11. The Secretariat services for the Joint Committee shall be performed jointly by the EFTA Secretariat and the GCC Secretariat.

DONE at Brussels on the Twenty-third day of May in the year Two Thousand which corresponds to the Nineteenth day of Safar Hegira, One Thousand four hundred and twenty-one.

Made in two original copies both in Arabic and English.

The Member States of
The European Free Trade Association

For the Co-operation Council for
the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC):

For the Swiss Delegation

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President-in-Office of the

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