

PRIORITIES
DURING THE NORWEGIAN EFTA COUNCIL CHAIR

First half of 2017

Special emphasis will be given to following closely, with the assistance of the EFTA Secretariat, developments between the United Kingdom and the European Union, with a view to maintaining close economic and trade relations with the United Kingdom.

1. Relations amongst EFTA countries

- Continue updating the Vaduz Convention (EFTA Convention) in light of the evolving needs of the EFTA States.
- Further developing Member States' common basis for future free trade negotiations, inter alia by formulating new approaches regarding trade in services and investment based on latest developments in international trade policy.

2. Third-country relations

Ongoing FTA negotiations

- India: continue negotiations with a view to concluding the process expeditiously.
- Indonesia: continue negotiations with a view to completing negotiations in the first half of 2017.
- Malaysia: advance negotiations substantively with a view to concluding the process in 2017.
- Vietnam: resume negotiations with a view to possibly concluding the process in 2017.
- Ecuador: continue negotiations with a view to making substantive progress.

Management and development of existing FTAs

- Mexico: advance negotiations on a substantive expansion of the agreement and move towards conclusion of the process in 2017.
- Southern African Customs Union: start negotiations on updating and improving the existing agreement.
- Chile: advance negotiations on updating and developing the agreement.
- Turkey: continue negotiations on a substantive expansion of the agreement.
- Canada: continue the exploratory process in view of a possible start of negotiations on a substantive expansion of the free trade agreement.
- 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.

3. Prospective partners and other activities

- Mercosur: hold preparatory meetings in early 2017 with a view to starting formal negotiations by mid-2017.
- East African Community: finalise the ongoing work with a view to signing a Joint Declaration on Cooperation in order to explore the prospects for developing closer trade relations.

- ASEAN: follow up previous contacts with a view to establishing closer relations.
- United States of America: continue and possibly deepen the trade policy dialogue with the US.
- EU: continue the interactions with the EU regarding the state of play in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership process.
- Follow developments with respect to international trade negotiations, in particular with the WTO as well as other negotiations, such as the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the ratification process of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).