



EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

30 November 2023

EFTA-INDIA 20TH ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS

Geneva, 20 to 29 November 2023

PUBLIC REPORT

The 20th round of negotiations between EFTA and India took place in Geneva and by videoconference on 20-29 November 2023. Ambassador Markus Schlagenhof, Delegate of the Federal Council for Trade Agreements and head of the World Trade Division at the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, acted as the EFTA spokesperson, while L. Satya Srinivas, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, led the Indian delegation.

Trade in Goods

EFTA and India had exchanged revised market access offers ahead of the round, and initial discussions of these took place.

Trade in Services

Revised market access offers in Trade in Services, which were part of a joint exchange with offers in Trade in Goods, were a central element for the 2-day meeting held between the EFTA States and India. In the absence of financial services offers, this sector was excluded from discussions in Geneva. Progress was achieved in the text of the Maritime Personnel Annex. Experts reviewed the Chapter and all Annexes (except Financial Services), and further exchanges allowed them to gain further insights on possible ways ahead.

Rules of Origin

The rules of origin made some textual progress in the annex while conceptually different approaches in relation to certification and verification procedures remain open. Progress was also achieved in the appendix on products-specific rules, but a landing zone is yet to be carved out as the appendix has to a large extent been reset through intersessional exchanges.

Trade Facilitation

Experts convened on India's request to discuss the area of trade facilitation, which was agreed earlier in the negotiation process. Based on intersessional exchanges and taking into consideration developments such as the ratification of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), the group made technical progress in a new negotiation text which incorporates and builds on the TFA.

SPS/TBT

On the basis of written comments exchanged prior to the round, experts addressed the outstanding issues in the SPS and TBT chapters respectively. Good progress was made in cleaning up several provisions, bringing both chapters close to finalisation. Following these constructive meetings, the Parties agreed on follow-ups with a view to finalising the SPS and TBT chapters at the earliest opportunity.

IPR

Experts discussed the IPR provisions under negotiations, building upon the progress made at the last round and in intersessional meetings. Ahead of the meeting, both sides exchanged language proposals aimed at facilitating agreement in some of the areas outstanding which were discussed during the round. Both sides agreed that more work needs to be done to bridge the remaining gaps and agreed to keep close contact ahead of the next engagement.

Trade and Sustainable Development

Experts reviewed the chapter and made good progress on some of the pending issues in particular in the areas of climate change, multilateral environmental agreements and gender. Considerable work is still needed on the text and the two sides agreed on follow-ups to make further progress.

Trade Remedies

Experts met on 28 November via videoconference to address the pending issues in articles *Subsidies and Countervailing Measures*, *Anti-dumping*, *Global Safeguard Measures* and *Bilateral Safeguard Measures*. Based on intersessional exchanges, discussions were productive and led to progress in the draft text, bringing it closer to finalisation. Both sides agreed to hold another videoconference soon to address the remaining issues.