



EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

EFTA-SINGAPORE 5TH JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

Videoconference

15 October 2020

REPORT

Delegations from the EFTA States and Singapore convened via videoconference on 15 October 2020 for their fifth Joint Committee meeting under the EFTA – Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Ms Katrín Einarsdóttir, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of Iceland in Geneva acted as EFTA spokesperson while the Singaporean delegation was led by Mr Chua Shun Loong, Director of the North America and Europe Division at the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The meeting was positive and constructive with both sides underlining the benefits arising from the steady increase in trade and investment flows under the FTA.

Regarding trade in goods, the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Customs and Origin Matters reported on the fifth meeting which had taken place on 14 October 2020 and the discussions on, *inter alia*, recent changes at national level as well as the implementation, annual exchange of customs data and possible updates of the FTA in the areas of rules of origin, list rules and trade facilitation. Furthermore, delegations reviewed the development of their trade in processed agricultural products and exchanged views on the article on emergency action.

In the area of trade in services, delegations exchanged views on possible cooperation in the field of “digital economy” with the inclusion of a chapter on electronic commerce into the FTA.

Turning to investment, delegations exchanged views on their lists of reservations and discussed a possible review of several articles in the investment chapter.

With regard to government procurement, delegations exchanged views about the developments in the WTO and in their relations with other free trade partners.

Turning to intellectual property rights, delegations shared information about recent developments and initiatives regarding IPR as well as their approach in negotiations with third countries.

In the area of trade and sustainable development, delegations exchanged views about EFTA's revised model chapter addressing trade-related labour and environmental issues. EFTA underlined the importance, in light of international developments, to include such a chapter in the FTA.

Delegations agreed to stay in close contact to pursue the follow-ups and set out the steps for the next meeting.