

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

TCR-L 1/2002
14 January 2002

Mr. Director-General,

In the absence of the Secretary-General, I am pleased to send you the attached communication from the EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and Croatia concerning the Agreement establishing a Free Trade Area between the EFTA States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Croatia on the other. I would kindly ask you to take the necessary steps to distribute a copy of this communication to the Members of the WTO.

Yours sincerely,

Pétur G. Thorsteinsson

Mr. Mike Moore
Director-General
WTO Secretariat
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COMMUNICATION BY THE PARTIES

AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING A FREE TRADE AREA BETWEEN THE EFTA STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and Croatia, with reference to Article XXIV: 7 (a) of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994, herewith transmit the text of the Agreement establishing a Free Trade Area between the EFTA States and the Republic of Croatia with its Annexes, Lists and Protocols. The bilateral arrangements on trade in agricultural products, which have been concluded between the Parties, are also transmitted herewith. They form part of the instruments creating the Free Trade Area.

The Agreement and the bilateral agricultural arrangements were signed on 21 June 2001. The Agreement entered into force for Croatia on 1 January 2002, and has been applied provisionally by Liechtenstein and Switzerland as of the same date. It is foreseen that the Agreement will enter into force between Iceland and Croatia and Norway and Croatia following their respective ratifications thereof during the first half of 2002.

In accordance with Article XXIV of GATT 1994, the objective of the Agreement is to eliminate duties and other restrictions on trade in industrial products, including fish and other marine products, between the EFTA States and the Republic of Croatia. Within the framework of the Agreement, bilateral agricultural arrangements have been concluded which provide for liberalised trade in agricultural products.

Upon the entry into force of the Agreement, the EFTA States will eliminate all duties and restrictions on industrial products originating in Croatia, while Croatia will gradually eliminate its duties until 1 January 2009. The Agreement also contains provisions, *inter alia*, on intellectual property rights, state monopolies, subsidies and competition.

The Parties will submit separately more detailed background information on the Agreement on the basis of the Standard Format for information. The text of the Agreement with its Annexes and Protocols is also available on the Internet at the EFTA Homepage (<http://www.efta.int>).