



EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

EFTA – MALAYSIA

14TH ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS

Geneva, 4-8 December 2023

PUBLIC REPORT

I. Context and General Assessment

The 14th round of negotiations towards the conclusion of a Malaysia-EFTA Economic Partnership Agreement (MEEPA) was held in Geneva from 4 to 8 December 2023. The negotiations started in 2014, following the signing of a Joint Declaration on Cooperation in 2010.

Since the 13th round in October 2022, several expert and chief negotiator meetings had been held, making progress on legal texts and facilitating an exchange of market access offers and reservation lists for trade in goods, trade in services, investments and government procurement, ahead of the 14th round.

To pave the way for further progress, follow-ups and intersessional meetings were agreed. The results will be reviewed in a meeting of chief negotiators in the first quarter of 2024. The next round is scheduled to take place in the second quarter of the year.

II. Trade in Goods

Experts engaged in productive discussions, and positive momentum was achieved. Both parties presented offers for market access, discussed outstanding issues in the text and identified areas requiring further consideration. Experts agreed to hold an intersessional meeting to continue the positive progress ahead of the next full round of negotiations.

III. Rules of Origin

Substantive progress was made through constructive discussions on the pending issues in the annex, and several articles were finalised with only a few issues remaining. More work

remains on the appendix on list rules, where both sides clarified outstanding proposals and agreed on the follow-ups needed towards the conclusion of the remaining HS chapters.

IV. Trade in Services

During the three-day meeting in this track, delegations reviewed all pending issues in the chapter and annexes, and exchanged views on the basis of revised market access offers. Experts cleaned several articles in the chapter, while progress in the annexes was more limited. Some compromise proposals tabled during the round may pave the way for further progress in upcoming rounds. Regarding revised market access offers, EFTA emphasised the importance of receiving substantially improved offers, as well as its wish to intensify discussions in future rounds or intersessional meetings.

V. Investment

Delegations built on the intersessional written exchanges and achieved additional progress. Among others, they agreed on the core article on according national treatment to their respective investors, and sounded out landing zones in other areas. Delegations achieved further understanding on their positions on the article on payments and transfers, and held detailed discussions on their lists of reservations to the national treatment commitment. Experts subscribed to detailed follow-up activities with a view to achieving further progress in the chapter.

VI. Government Procurement

Experts engaged in productive discussions regarding the chapter, annex and market access offers on government procurement. The parties presented their respective offers for market access and discussed the sectors and levels of coverage, as well as the thresholds and time periods considered to be appropriate. Parties also discussed the outstanding issues in the text, and identified areas requiring further consideration. Experts agreed to hold an intersessional meeting to continue the positive progress ahead of the next full round of negotiations.

VII. Trade and Sustainable Development

Trade and sustainable development experts made timely progress on some thematic articles relating to trade and the protection of the environment. On articles relating to trade and labour standards, as well as on horizontal provisions, further work is required. Experts agreed on follow-ups paving the way for further progress before and in the next meeting.

VIII. Intellectual Property Rights

Experts engaged in constructive discussions, leading to advancements in the text within a number of the open articles. Both parties presented text proposals aimed at paving the way for a mutually satisfactory solution, and identified areas requiring further review and consultation. Experts agreed to hold issue-specific meetings on key areas still outstanding ahead of the next full round of negotiations.