

PRIORITIES OF THE ICELANDIC CHAIR OF THE EFTA COUNCIL

2021-2022

1. Relations amongst EFTA countries

- Continue to adapt the EFTA Convention and its annexes to changing needs

2. EFTA Trade Policy

General

- Keep EFTA as a key platform for the EFTA States' trade policy and commit to keeping it relevant for the future
- Strengthen common efforts among EFTA States to better communicate about trade benefits and EFTA States' trade policies
- Reflect on EFTA's mid-term perspective, focusing on managing and strengthening current agreements as well as negotiating new agreements
- Aim at dedicating more attention to longer-term relation building with current and potential partners, including regional partners
- Analyse the development of trade policies of important partners, such as the UK, and possible implications for EFTA States' trade and trade policies
- Analyse the impact of large regional trade pacts in Asia, specifically the CPTPP, and follow closely the possibility of US re-engagement as well as the accession process of the UK
- At the end of the chairmanship period, submit a final report to the EFTA Council based on progress towards the Icelandic Chairs priorities

Horizontal issues

- Strengthen and deepen cooperation between EFTA Countries on urgent trade matters
- Implement the adopted measures to establish greater transparency with respect to information related to trade negotiations in particular by fostering transparency

through close and regular dialogue and consultation with the EFTA Advisory Bodies and through information to the public

- Continue to foster informal dialogues between EFTA Ministers with regular intervals to further strengthen the cooperation
- Strengthen the implementation and monitoring of chapters on trade and sustainable development, and finalise the exploration on the need for sustainability impact assessments
- Increase the monitoring of the implementation of FTAs by in particular analysing the preference utilisation of FTAs
- Finalise work on e-commerce to include digital trade provisions in future agreements
- Implement technical cooperation activities to the benefit of the contracting parties including *ex ante* modules with appropriate partner countries

Ongoing FTA negotiations

- Finalise the legal review, resolve outstanding issues and address concerns related to deforestation and climate change with Mercosur
- Conclude negotiations with Moldova
- Continue negotiations with India, Malaysia, and Vietnam towards the conclusion of free trade agreements
- Relaunch negotiations with Thailand as soon as domestic preparatory processes are completed

Management and development of existing FTAs

- Work towards the conclusion of the review of the FTAs with SACU and Chile
- Continue negotiations on the modernisation of the Agreement with Mexico as soon as the parties are able to do so
- Work towards finalising the update of the bilateral agricultural agreements with the Palestinian Authority
- Aim at swiftly addressing implementation issues with current partners
- Aim at addressing arising problems with EFTA partners and mapping out existing ones in order to undertake appropriate action

- Update the rules of origin protocols/annexes with PEM partners with a link to the PEM Convention, also taking the alternative rules into account
- Update the rules of procedures when appropriate to reflect shift to digital work processes

Potential partners and other activities

- Launch negotiations with Kosovo
 - Work towards preparation of negotiations with Pakistan
 - Sign a Joint Declaration of Cooperation with ASEAN
 - Aim to hold the first Joint Committee meeting with Nigeria under the Joint Declaration of Cooperation to assess the possibility to further strengthen trade relations
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