



# EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

28 November 2023

## **EFTA-THAILAND 7<sup>TH</sup> ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS**

*Geneva, 6-9 November 2023*

### **PUBLIC REPORT**

#### **I. Context**

EFTA and Thailand met for the 7<sup>th</sup> round of negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates discussed Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Trade Remedies, Investment, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), E-commerce, Government Procurement, and Cooperation & Capacity Building. The working groups on Intellectual Property Rights and on Legal and Horizontal Issues and Dispute Settlement will hold meetings in the coming weeks. Discussions on the chapter on Trade Facilitation were concluded in an intersessional meeting on 5 October. Based on the progress made during the round, EFTA and Thailand reiterated their objective to conclude a modern, comprehensive and ambitious Free Trade Agreement in 2024. The next round is foreseen to take place in Bangkok in January 2024.

#### **II. Trade in Goods**

EFTA and Thailand continued discussions on the draft Chapter on trade in goods, including issues relating to trade restrictions and technical amendments. Both sides also continued discussing market access based on the third exchange of offers held before the round. Parties presented their respective offers and shared their interests and sensitivities ahead of the next exchange of revised offers, which will take place before the next round. They continued to make progress at a steady pace.

#### **III. Rules of Origin**

Progress was steady with EFTA and Thai experts going over all outstanding articles of the text of the Rules of Origin Annex resulting in useful discussions on most of the pending issues and the cleaning of two articles as well as parts of others. Progress was also made on the list rules appendix bringing the number of agreed chapters to well over 50%. Both sides provided clarifications on their outstanding proposals and agreed on follow-ups for further work needed ahead of the next round.

#### **IV. Trade in Services**

EFTA and Thailand held constructive discussions, enabling further textual progress on the draft trade in services chapter and some of its annexes. On market access, delegates discussed their revised offers, noting proposed amendments and identifying areas for improvement.

## **V. Investment**

Experts achieved further progress throughout the draft investment chapter, agreeing amongst others on the article on restrictions to safeguard the balance of payments and sounding out landing zones for additional provisions. They also continued discussions on reservations to the core obligation to accord national treatment to their respective investors. Delegations subscribed to detailed follow-up activities with a view to making further progress at the next round.

## **VI. E-commerce**

Building on written exchanges prior to the round, delegations made additional headway in an already advanced e-commerce chapter, agreeing amongst others on the article on paperless trade administration and finalising the definitions. EFTA and Thailand committed to follow-up activities to pave the way for further progress in upcoming exchanges.

## **VII. SMEs**

Experts deepened discussions on the SME chapter based on Thailand's suggested amendments to EFTA's initial text proposals. They made progress by agreeing on the first text elements under the general provisions and the article on information sharing and transparency. Delegations subscribed to follow-up tasks with a view to further their understanding of their respective text proposals and possibilities.

## **VIII. Government Procurement**

The discussion on a Government Procurement Chapter continued this round. EFTA and Thailand took note of their divergent approaches to the possible outcome of the negotiations, including the opening of public procurement markets, and agreed to revert to the issue at the next round.

## **IX. Cooperation and Capacity Building**

Experts continued their discussions of the chapter on cooperation and made good progress. They agreed that further alignment with the cooperation provisions in other chapters of the agreement is needed and decided to continue the discussion at the next round.

## **X. Trade Remedies**

Following written exchanges before the round, both sides continued their discussions on the pending issues regarding anti-dumping measures, global safeguard measures and bilateral safeguard measures. EFTA and Thailand exchanged in-depth views on the latest text proposals, gaining a better understanding of their respective positions and practices. They committed to intersessional follow-up activities to pave the way for progress at the next round.