



EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

EFTA–MALAYSIA 16th ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS

Geneva, 4–8 November 2024

PUBLIC REPORT

I. Context and General Assessment

EFTA and Malaysia met for the 16th round of negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland from 4 to 8 November 2024. Since the 15th round in Kuala Lumpur in May 2024, experts and Heads of Delegation had met online, making progress on legal texts and market access.

During the 16th round, delegates discussed trade in goods, rules of origin (RoO), investment, trade in services, legal and horizontal Issues, intellectual property rights (IPR), government procurement, trade and sustainable development (TSD) and cooperation. Good progress was achieved, and discussions on IPR, government procurement, and legal and horizontal issues were concluded.

Negotiations in other areas are at an advanced stage, and meetings will take place in the coming months to discuss the pending issues. At the latest round, EFTA and Malaysia reiterated their common objective to conclude a modern, comprehensive and ambitious economic partnership agreement (MEEPA).

II. Trade in Goods

Significant progress was achieved on the trade in goods chapter. For agriculture, Malaysia has accepted EFTA members states' offers, while a few requests from EFTA remain to be further discussed. The Parties also discussed the next steps towards finalising trade in goods, including the preparation of cover notes and concession lists.

III. Rules of Origin (RoO)

Progress was achieved in the RoO group, with agreement reached on seven chapters in the list rules appendix (PSRs). Challenges remain and further work will be needed to finalise the six outstanding chapters in the list rules.

IV. Trade in Services

The services group made further progress and finalised both the chapter on services and the annex on financial services. The negotiations on the texts were thus concluded. Delegations also made progress towards finalising the schedules of specific commitments.

V. Investment

Experts held constructive negotiations and agreed on the text of the investment chapter. The chapter establishes key commitments to provide equal treatment to domestic and foreign investors (national treatment) in non-services sectors like manufacturing. The chapter also covers cross-border payments and transfers related to investments. Delegations also made progress towards finalising the annex, which lists each Party's exceptions to the national treatment commitment.

VI. Government Procurement

The negotiations on government procurement were finalised during the 16th round, encompassing provisions governing public procurement procedures and providing a framework for improved access to each Party's public procurement market.

VII. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Experts concluded discussions on all remaining issues in the area of IPR.

VIII. Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD)

Experts held constructive discussions and agreed on most of the open issues in the comprehensive chapter on TSD. A few issues remain for further consultation and discussion among experts, who will meet as soon as possible to finalise the pending matters.

IX. Economic Cooperation

Experts engaged in constructive discussions, resulting in the finalisation of the cooperation chapter. The chapter sets out a framework for cooperation and capacity building to enhance trading and investment opportunities arising from the agreement. It aims to foster trade and economic cooperation, and to contribute to sustainable development. Potential cooperative activities will be outlined in a memorandum of understanding, which is currently under negotiation.

X. Legal and Horizontal Issues

Legal experts resolved the few pending issues in the preamble and the chapters on general, institutional and final provisions.