

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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## EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION AND THE FINLAND-EFTA ASSOCIATION

### Information Furnished by Member States

#### European Free Trade Association

1. The EFTA member States have undertaken to provide, as the Association develops, additional information in accordance with Article XXIV:7(a) of the General Agreement.
2. In November 1968, at the twenty-fifth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, the member States of EFTA submitted their seventh report on the progress made in implementing the Stockholm Convention. A brief outline of the development since the last session is set out below. More detailed information can be found in the Ninth Annual Report of the European Free Trade Association<sup>1</sup> covering the period from 1 July 1968 to 30 June 1969, as well as in the publication "EFTA Trade 1959-1967"<sup>1</sup> (published in March 1969).
3. The main objectives of EFTA have remained the creation of a large and outward-looking European market, and the harmonious development and expansion of world trade, objectives which the member States have continued to pursue during the period covered by this report.
4. EFTA's main schedule of tariff and quota dismantling was completed by the end of 1966. Since then the work of the Association has been directed towards ensuring the good functioning of the free-trade arrangements and towards the elimination of "indirect" barriers to trade.
5. In accordance with the work programme agreed by EFTA Ministers in May 1968, much time during the period covered by this report has been devoted to reviewing the rules of origin and to clarifying the provisions of the Stockholm Convention dealing with government aids, the practices of public undertakings, restrictive business practices and rights of establishment. These reviews are still going on. Increasing attention is also being paid to the elimination of administrative and technical barriers to trade, including marking regulations, testing and inspection procedures, compulsory technical requirements etc.

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<sup>1</sup>Copies are being circulated to delegations (L/3284/Add.1).

6. In the agricultural sector the Council has completed a general review of the relevant provisions of the EFTA Convention. At their meeting in May 1969, EFTA Ministers agreed that the Council should examine the specific steps that might be taken with the aim of improving trading conditions for agricultural products. This examination is under way.

7. No new bilateral agricultural agreements have been concluded between EFTA countries during the period covered by this report.

8. During the period covered by this report Iceland has applied for membership of EFTA, and in the negotiations on the terms and conditions to be offered to Iceland all major points have been settled.

#### The Finland-EFTA Association

9. As stated in thereport on the implementation of the Finland-EFTA Agreement submitted to the twenty-fifth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES, Finland abolished all import duties and quantitative restrictions on industrial products of EFTA origin on 31 December 1967. Finland is currently participating in the work to which reference is made in the preceding paragraphs.