

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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## ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS RELEVANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF PART IV

### Addendum

### AUSTRIA

The following actions have been taken by the Austrian Federal Government in implementing Part IV of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade:

In the period under review Austria has further endeavoured to enlarge the possibilities for access to the Austrian Market for developing countries. In carrying out their work the competent Austrian authorities did their best endeavours to take into account the provisions contained in Part IV of the General Agreement.

The second stage of the Austrian Scheme of Preferences (Tariff Preference Amendment Act 1974, Federal Law Gazette No. 473/1974) will enter into force on 1 January 1975. The amendment will improve the substantial advantages which the Tariff Preference Act 1972 has already provided to developing countries and which lead to an increase of imports from the countries beneficiaries of the scheme. Details of these improvements have already been notified to the Director-General of GATT in a letter of this mission of 21 August 1974, reference No. 5038-1/74.

May I just recall that the said amendment to the Tariff Preference Act 1972 increases substantially the number of items for which a preference is granted. In the agricultural sector, for instance, the number of items covered by the scheme which was 113 tariff lines will be brought to 148 tariff lines. A major improvement will also be the increase of the preferential tariff cut from 30 to 50 per cent for items in the industrial sector; for the textile sector the preferential tariff cut will be increased to 25 per cent. At the same time practically all existing exemptions in this sector will be abolished; therefore the whole sector of cotton textiles will be included in the Austrian Scheme as from 1 January 1975.

Upon request by developing countries and in implementing Part IV of GATT Austria introduced on 1 April 1972 a "Law concerning imports of hand-made products duty free or at a reduced rate of duty with the aim of promoting trade relations with developing countries". Since this date some thirty developing countries have submitted lists of products for which they request special tariff treatment in accordance with the provisions of this law. After the establishment of a comprehensive list of products on the basis of these requests - which proved quite often to be difficult and time consuming - duty-free treatment or a 50 per cent tariff reduction for the products contained in this consolidated list will be put into force by decree in the near future.

During the period under review Austria has neither introduced any new quantitative restrictions nor has it introduced new customs duties or increased existing ones. The still existing restrictions concerning tariff items No. ex 29.44 - penicillin, thyrotricin and 30.03 - medicaments - are applied very liberally; no applications for imports from developing countries have been refused.

The active participation in the work of the International Trade Centre is pursued intensively. Officials have been provided gratuitously to the Centre. In accordance with concrete requests of the ITC for replies to certain questions, the Austrian authorities made it possible for officials of the Centre to get into contact with the competent circles of the Austrian industry and provided them with appropriate information.

In an additional effort to develop trade with developing countries information concerning export possibilities into Austria has been provided by Austria to developing countries by making intensive use of the Austrian foreign trade delegations which are located all over the world. In this respect I should like to draw your attention to a publication issued on a regular basis by the Bundeswirtschaftskammer ("Nachrichten für den Aussenhandel" - News for foreign trade) which provides regular information on the market situation in different countries, so creating preconditions for the establishment of concrete business relations between developing countries and Austria.

In 1974 twenty-one scholars from developing countries had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the situation in Austria, in particular in the field of trade and economy.

In 1973 and 1974 Austria organized for the seventh and eighth time a special training course for customs officials from developing countries; in addition, two special training courses for customs officers of the Preventive and/or Investigation Service from developing countries have been held. In total,

forty-six customs officials from African and Asian countries had the opportunity to study the structure and functioning of the Austrian customs and finance administration. In this way Austria assisted the customs administrations of developing countries.

In view of the importance of commodity agreements for developing countries, Austria continued participating in such agreements and, furthermore, acceded to the International Cocoa Arrangement 1972.