

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS RELEVANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF PART IV AND OPERATION OF THE ENABLING CLAUSE

Addendum

The following communication has been received from the delegation of Austria in connexion with the implementation of Part IV and operation of the Enabling Clause.

1. Austria has so far concluded thirty-two bilateral agreements with developing countries which provide for the importation duty free or at reduced rates of duty of handicraft products. Five of these agreements have been concluded with least-developed countries (Malawi, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Nepal and Afghanistan). In 1979 products with a value of more than AS 83 million have been imported at reduced rates of duty under these agreements. It should be recalled that all developing countries have the possibility to conclude similar agreements with Austria.
2. In each of the years 1979 and 1980, two special courses for customs officials from various developing countries were held in Vienna.¹ Information of tariff preferences and rules of origin have, inter alia, been provided during these courses.
3. Austria has - in co-operation with Switzerland - organized an interregional GSP-seminar within the framework of the UNCTAD/UNDP-project which took place in Vienna in July 1979. Thirty-three officials from twenty-three developing countries (least developed and middle income countries) have participated in this seminar.
4. Austrian experts on customs and origin matters participated in national, regional and interregional seminars which were organized by the UNCTAD/UNDP-project "Assistance to the developing countries for the fuller utilization of the GSP" in various countries in 1979 and 1980.

¹Copies of reports on the sixteenth and seventeenth courses are available with the secretariat for consultation by interested contracting parties.

5. Zimbabwe has become a beneficiary country to the Austrian GSP in May 1980.

6. The first two stages of the Geneva (1979) Protocol have been implemented on 1 July 1980. As a consequence, the GSP duties for industrial products have been further reduced; similar reductions will result from the future stages implemented within the Geneva (1979) Protocol.

7. With effect from 1 July 1980, the coverage of products benefitting from GSP has been enlarged through the incorporation of certain agricultural items (frozen dates, certain preparations of fish in tins, mango chutney), products which are of particular interest to developing countries. With respect to two items the already existing preferential duties have been further reduced (coffee, roasted, and coffee extracts).

8. Austria participates actively in the work of the international commodity agreements. In particular, on 11 September 1980 Austria has signed the 5th extension of the International Wheat Agreement; this treaty has been approved by the National Council on 17 December 1979. As one of the purposes of this agreement is to contribute to the stabilization of wheat markets, the acceptance of this agreement represents an act of solidarity vis-à-vis the international community and therefore also vis-à-vis developing countries.