

RESTRICTED

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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SWEDISH IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

The following communiqué, issued by the Swedish Ministry of Commerce on 10 September 1954, has been forwarded by the Swedish Government for the information of the contracting parties.

"After consulting the National Bank of Sweden (Sveriges Riksbank), the Government has decided to extend a large measure of liberalization to imports payable in dollars.

"It is common knowledge that negotiations have been proceeding for some months in Western Europe with a view to establishing a more general system of currency convertibility. As these plans come to fruition, it may well be that competition in the various markets will increase and that that will have an effect on prices. In view of these possibilities, a number of Western European countries have already adopted or have announced the adoption at an early date of measures designed to confer more freedom on the importation of dollar goods. The Swedish Government considers, for its part, that it is desirable from now on to introduce more liberal measures for the import trade.

"The main object of the measures in force in Sweden since 1947 for the regulation of imports payable in dollars was to reserve foreign currency for the purchase of raw materials and fuel as well as for capital goods essential for the Swedish national economy. As a result, the quantity of processed American articles reaching the Swedish market was small. It may be expected that the wider liberalization of the goods, designed as it is to ensure their unrestricted importation, will advantageously affect their price and quality. It is also a fact that the importation of certain raw materials, foodstuffs and semi-manufactured goods can be carried out in more favourable conditions from the dollar area than from other countries.

"The Swedish Government thus intends to liberalize completely the importation of large classes of goods, which means that it will be possible in future to import such goods without a licence. The choice of these classes of goods will be determined by price advantage and the competition resulting from unrestricted dollar imports.

Detailed provisions regarding the sectors to be liberalized in the first instance are being prepared at present by the Ministry of Commerce with the help of the competent authorities.¹

"As regards the importation of non-liberalized products from the dollar area, licences will be issued, as heretofore, in accordance with a government plan. There is also an intention to authorize the increased importation of dollar commodities which can be obtained outside the dollar area.

"Simultaneously with the liberalization of dollar imports, steps will be taken further to relax restrictions on imports from the OEEC countries. Goods which as a result of these measures it will be possible to import from these countries without a licence include footwear, linen goods, motor-cycles and certain dyes and varnishes."

¹ The Swedish Government has transmitted the text of two Notices issued by the National Commission on Industry and Commerce, covering (i) licence-free imports from the dollar area and (ii) licensing of imports originating in the dollar area. These are on file at the secretariat.