

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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ACCESSION OF POLAND

A formal application for full accession to the General Agreement has been received from the Government of Poland. In this connexion the representative of Poland at the meeting of the Council on 16 December made the statement which is reproduced below and it was agreed that this matter would be considered by the Council at its next meeting to be held on 10 January 1967.

I asked for the floor in order to inform you and the representatives of contracting parties in the Council that, on the instructions of the Government of the Polish People's Republic, I have requested the opening, as soon as possible, of the customary procedure for Poland's accession to the General Agreement under Article XXXIII of the GATT.

The history of Poland's relations with the contracting parties is somewhat lengthy: I have before me a document dated September 1957 in which the representative of the Polish Government expressed my country's desire to establish contact with GATT.

If you permit, I shall quote a few figures: in 1957 the value of our trade with GATT countries was \$1,035 million; by 1965 it had risen to \$2,026 million, i.e. 44 per cent of our total trade in that year, which amounted to \$4,568 million.

On 9 November 1959 Poland signed the Declaration concerning relations between contracting parties and Poland. The Declaration has been accepted by sixty-five GATT Member countries. May I emphasize here that this fact already is in the nature of a multilateral act, because for us it derives from the intrinsic character of the General Agreement, which represents multilateralism in trade relations between countries.

Association with GATT under the 1959 Declaration has given us a certain number of advantages, but in practical terms the results of this association are still rather meagre. In your recent speech at Bad-Godesberg, Mr. Chairman, speaking of relations between Poland and GATT, you described those relations as being somewhat platonic. Now, I do not believe that it is in an organization concerned with trade that one seeks platonic solutions.

In order to change this state of affairs, we stated at the outset of the Kennedy Round - that is to say at the time of the Ministerial Meeting in May 1963 - that we were prepared to participate in this great endeavour. We presented a proposal concerning the nature of our participation and we also proposed that one of the sub-committees of the Trade Negotiations Committee - the Sub-Committee on Non-Tariff Barriers - should also deal with special questions, since not having a customs tariff we considered that our case was a special one.

This proposal concerning the nature of the work of the Sub-Committee on Non-Tariff Barriers was accepted by the Ministerial Meeting. In June 1963, at the meeting of the Working Party that was carrying out the second review of relations between Poland and contracting parties, certain questions were put to us concerning our participation in the Kennedy Round. The clarifications I gave at that meeting were reproduced in October 1963 by the GATT secretariat in document TN.64/NIB/1. But before that, in September 1963, Poland had been admitted to the Trade Negotiations Committee and to the Committee on Agriculture. In November 1963, at a meeting of the Sub-Committee on Non-Tariff Barriers of the Trade Negotiations Committee, it was decided to establish a working party that could establish the terms of Poland's participation in the Kennedy Round. On that occasion the GATT secretariat prepared a document (TN.64/NIB/9). In the period February to April 1964, there were two informal meetings between representatives of the countries principally interested in trade with Poland and the Polish representative. Following those discussions, the Polish delegation presented a document to the Trade Negotiations Committee on 27 April 1964, setting forth Poland's desiderata and the undertakings it would be prepared to give (document TN.64/NIB/15). On 6 May 1964, the GATT Trade Negotiations Committee, meeting at ministerial level, unanimously adopted a Resolution from which I shall quote as follows:

"The Committee notes that there has been under consideration for some time the question of ways and means of Poland's participation in the Kennedy Round. This consideration has taken place on the basis of the Polish proposals listed and explained in TN.64/NIB/15. The interest of Poland in participating actively in the trade negotiations is warmly welcomed and there is general agreement that it should be feasible to work out a practical arrangement. The Committee recommends that these discussions should be actively pursued to an early conclusion."

The Working Party then established to draw up the conditions for Poland's participation in the Kennedy Round met in June 1964. After two meetings, the Working Party decided to request the GATT secretariat to prepare a draft agreement between the contracting parties and Poland. On 1 April 1965 the Polish delegation to the Trade Negotiations Committee presented Poland's offer for the negotiations. By a letter dated 16 September 1965, this offer was extended to agricultural products.

I must apologize, Mr. Chairman, for this lengthy enumeration but I think it is perhaps pertinent to recall the sequence of events to members of the Council here before we present our request, since in actual fact it is a sequence that was interrupted in October 1964 when the Working Party established to define the terms of Poland's participation in the Kennedy Round was not able to meet for lack of agreement on the actual basis for such participation.

And this brings us to our request. I should like, Mr. Chairman, to ask you to include in the agenda for the Council's next meeting our application to accede to the General Agreement under Article XXXIII. If, as I hope, our request is put before the Council at its next meeting and if, as is usually the case, a working party is established, I should like to ask that the working party should take fully into consideration the procedure already established by the Council and explained in your note on procedures for accession, presented to the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their twenty-second session in document W.22/6 of 12 March 1965, and in particular that it should take as a basis all the documents of the Working Party on relations with Poland as well as all the documents and draft documents concerning Poland's participation in the Kennedy Round, including the secretariat's drafts on the terms of an agreement between Poland and the contracting parties.

As concerns the aspect of trade negotiations as part of the accession procedure, the Polish Government considers that the negotiations now proceeding in the context of the Kennedy Round constitute trade negotiations for accession within the meaning of Article XXXIII of the General Agreement.