

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/616

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Limited Distribution

## TRADE RESTRICTIONS ON ARTIFICIAL LIMBS AND

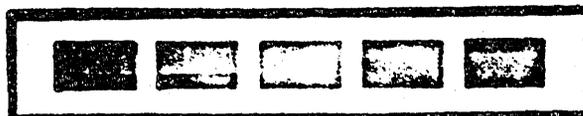
### ORTHOPAEDIC APPLIANCES

#### Request for Information

The CONTRACTING PARTIES at their Eleventh Session considered a Recommendation which had been referred to them by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (SR.11/11 and L/496). This Recommendation, which was drawn up by a Committee of Experts on Public Health, proposed that imports of artificial limbs and orthopaedic appliances should be freed from customs duties, prohibitions and restrictions and that import formalities should be reduced to a minimum. At the Eleventh Session a representative of the World Health Organization, to which the Recommendation had also been referred, supported the proposal. He said that his Organization was interested in this question as it had a direct bearing on its programmes of medical rehabilitation for the disabled; he referred to the report of a Conference on Prosthetics, convened by the World Health Organization in 1954, which had recommended that "an attempt be made to abolish all national customs barriers on prostheses", and said that the World Health Organization shares the views of the Conference on this point and would like to see the question discussed and a favourable solution reached.

In order to assist the Council of Europe and the World Health Organization in their further studies of these problems - and to enable the CONTRACTING PARTIES to comply with the Council's request to study the question - the secretariat was instructed to invite contracting parties to submit details of their duties, restrictions and formalities affecting trade in the products concerned and also to comment on the Recommendation. Accordingly, contracting parties are invited to submit the following information, if possible by 1 May 1957. After consultation with the Council of Europe and the World Health Organization it has been agreed that the products to be covered by this enquiry are artificial limbs and other orthopaedic appliances required by war veterans and other disabled persons.

1. Import duties - The numbers and descriptions of the tariff items under which the various appliances are classified and the rates of duty.
2. Suspension of duties - Any legal provisions under which the customs administration may suspend or reduce customs duties and the suspensions or reductions at present in force for any of these appliances.



3. Import restrictions - Details of any controls or restrictions on importation (licence, quotas, prohibitions, payments restrictions, etc.) from the various sources of supply.
4. Formalities - Details of any trade or customs formalities whose removal or relaxation might facilitate importation of these appliances.
5. Statistical information -
  - (a) Statistics of the imports of each item in 1955, by country of origin (in United States dollars).
  - (b) Statistics of national production and exports of each item in 1955 (in United States dollars).

Contracting parties are also invited when submitting the information requested above (or at a later date, but prior to the Twelfth Session) to comment on the proposals submitted by the Council of Europe and the World Health Organization, and to indicate whether they would be prepared to admit imports of artificial limbs and other orthopaedic appliances free of duty and restriction and, if so, on what conditions, or to take other administrative measures to facilitate importation.

The information and comments received will be distributed to the contracting parties in addenda to this document.

