

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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## BELGIAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

### Submission of information by the Government of Belgium on the measures to be developed for the elimination of the restrictions

Under the terms of the Decision of 3 December 1955 granting a waiver to Belgium in connexion with import restrictions on certain agricultural products, the Belgian Government was to submit to the CONTRACTING PARTIES more precise and detailed information as soon as practicable after 3 May 1956 on the measures to be developed for the elimination of the restrictions. By document L/505 of 21 August 1956 contracting parties were informed that owing to special circumstances prevailing at the time it had not been possible for the Belgian Government to submit a programme as provided for in the Decision. At the Eleventh Session the Belgian representative informed the CONTRACTING PARTIES that studies for the framing of such a programme were under way and that the policy decision to be taken by the Benelux Ministers would be communicated to contracting parties immediately after it had been taken. The following communication, dated 5 June 1957, has now been received from the Belgian Government:

"On the occasion of the examination of the first annual report on Belgian import restrictions on certain agricultural products, more detailed information had been requested concerning the measures to be developed for the elimination of outstanding restrictions.

"At the time it was been possible to establish a programme concerning the measures to be taken. Studies for the determination in this particular case of the most appropriate arrangements to lead to the establishment of such a programme had only just been initiated.

"However, the final policy decision is to be taken by the Benelux Ministers. A joint Ministerial meeting has recently taken place, the result of which is communicated hereafter:

"The Ministerial group has examined the report submitted by the Committee for the Harmonization of Agricultural Policies including an analysis of the different aspects of harmonization problems. The report of the Committee contains recommendations concerning the principles to be followed and the regulations at present maintained in this important field of Benelux integration. The various aspects examined were as follows: cost factors - marketing - liberalization prospects in the case of certain products - examination of national budgets in relation to agricultural policies.

"The decisions taken in respect of the intra Benelux liberalization of certain products are as follows:

1. "The Committee for the Harmonization of Agricultural Policies has been requested to submit to the Ministerial group practical proposals for the liberalization of trade in potatoes intended for use as food. The Committee is requested to examine specifically the situation of producers of potatoes for industrial uses.
2. "The Committee for the Harmonization of Agricultural Policies has been requested to submit to the next meeting of the Ministerial group a report concerning the possibility of liberalizing eggs for hatching and one-day old chicks.
3. "The Committee for the Harmonization of Agricultural Policies is requested to examine the possibility of liberalizing cauliflowers, tomatoes and cherries and to consider how soon such liberalization can be effected.

"The Ministerial group has decided further to set up a working party on coordination with the task of coordinating, facilitating and expediting work aiming at the harmonization of agricultural policies.

4. "The foregoing provisions indicate that the method followed for the achievement of a gradual liberalization of trade is twofold. It involves the study and implementation of general arrangements for the equalization of competitive conditions as between the Benelux countries and an examination on a 'case by case' basis of appropriate measures for the elimination of quantitative restrictions."