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CONTRACTING PARTIES
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GREEK CUSTOMS TARIFF REFORM

Note by the Greek Government

In a communication dated 26 December 1957 (L/787) the Greek Government informed the CONTRACTING PARTIES that it had undertaken a general revision of its Customs Tariff as such reform had become absolutely necessary for both technical and general economic reasons.

The revision was considered imperative from the technical point of view because of the contractual obligation entered into by Greece (as a signatory to the Brussels Convention of 9 January 1951 and the 1955 Protocol of amendment) to formulate its customs tariff on the basis of the Brussels Nomenclature.

From the general economic standpoint, a revision was considered absolutely necessary in view of the need to re-adapt the existing tariff so as to bring it into line with the country's present-day economic situation and to make it an adequate instrument for regulating Greece's trade policy and general economic policy, in the light both of the real state of the country's economy and of international economic trends.

The existing tariff which dates back to 1923, is out of date and incapable of assisting the Greek Government's efforts to bring about the country's economic development. The revision of the customs tariff is already in its final stage, and the new tariff will be submitted to Parliament at its next session for approval in the form of a statute, which will enter into force as soon as it is enacted. Thus there will be a very brief interval between the completion of the revision and the submission of the new tariff to Parliament and its entry into force immediately afterwards. There will therefore not be enough time to apply the procedure laid down in Article XXVIII of the General Agreement. Moreover, a partial application of the new tariff in such a way as to postpone tariff increases relating to items bound against increase, will be impossible because of the radical changes in the nomenclature and the changed layout of the new tariff.

For the foregoing reasons, the Greek Government asks that the CONTRACTING PARTIES approve the application of the new tariff in its entirety, before the negotiations provided for in Article XXVIII take place, in view of the fact that the new tariff provides for tariff reductions which will offset the proposed increases.

It should also be noted that the tariff increases under the new customs tariff will not substantially alter the concessions listed in Schedule XXV.

In order that the CONTRACTING PARTIES may be more fully informed, the Greek Government will notify them of the concessions which it intends to modify or withdraw and of the new concessions to be granted in compensation. At the same time, Schedule XXV listing the concessions made by Greece within the framework of GATT will have to be replaced by a new schedule in view of the fact that the new tariff is based on the Brussels Nomenclature. The new schedule will be communicated in good time to the CONTRACTING PARTIES together with copies of the new customs tariff and the necessary explanatory notes relating both to the concessions modified or withdrawn and those granted in compensation, and to the corrections necessitated by the adoption of the new nomenclature.

The Greek Government is convinced that the CONTRACTING PARTIES will deem entirely satisfactory the new concessions granted in compensation for the modifications arising from the new customs tariff.

However, if the CONTRACTING PARTIES do not regard these new concessions as satisfactory, the Greek Government will have no objection to entering into negotiations in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article XXVIII of the General Agreement.