

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

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CONTRACTING PARTIES
Seventeenth Session

EXAMINATION OF THE COMMON TARIFF OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY UNDER ARTICLE XXIV:5(a)

Note by the Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES

Committee I in its second report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES dealt with the question of the timing of the examination of the EEC Common Tariff. The Committee noted the view that the exact nature of all rates of duty in the Common Tariff would not be known until after the negotiations under article XXIV:6 had been completed and the final collective judgement could not therefore be passed before then.

The Committee considered that the CONTRACTING PARTIES should decide by which body and in what way a joint examination should be carried out.

These questions were considered by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their sixteenth session without any decision being taken. An opportunity was, however, provided through means of informal meetings which took place recently for delegations to obtain further clarification and certain additional information from the European Commission as to how the Common Tariff has been established and how the criteria of Article XXIV will be met. This information has been or will be made available to all contracting parties. The Commission has furthermore declared that it will promptly furnish such additional statistical information which contracting parties would consider necessary for the conduct of the examination under Article XXIV:5(a).

The CONTRACTING PARTIES have now to take a decision on the procedural question deferred to them by Committee I.

In view of the fact that the CONTRACTING PARTIES will not be in session for some time to come, the most practical solution seems to be to request the Tariff Negotiations Committee to carry out the actual examination of the Common Tariff pursuant to Article XXIV:5(a) and to report to the CONTRACTING PARTIES. For this purpose interested delegations which are not participating in the work of the Tariff Negotiations Committee at that time should be co-opted as members of the Committee at their request.

The exact timing of the examination should be decided upon by the Committee itself in the light of the progress made in the negotiations pursuant to Article XXIV:6.