

EFTA and MERCOSUR prepare for upcoming negotiations on a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement

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Mr Sveinung Røren, Director at the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries and Ambassador Guillermo Daniel Raimondi, Under-Secretary for Economic Integration with the Americas and MERCOSUR at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina

Delegations from the EFTA States and MERCOSUR met on 17 February in Brussels to prepare for the upcoming negotiations of a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement

The meeting, held with the aim to prepare for the start of negotiations, was chaired on the EFTA side by Mr Sveinung Røren, Director at the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries, while Ambassador Guillermo Daniel Raimondi, Under-Secretary for Economic Integration with the Americas and MERCOSUR at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, led the MERCOSUR team.

The Parties discussed the framework for the negotiations, including the structure of the negotiations, the calendar of meetings, the appointment of spokespersons, and the structure of the agreement. The Parties also discussed the exchange of draft texts and of information prior to the first round.

Merchandise trade between EFTA States and MERCOSUR reached USD 7.2 billion in 2016 with total imports and exports amounting to USD 3.7 billion and USD 3.5 billion, respectively. EFTA's top exports to MERCOSUR included pharmaceutical products (USD 1.4 billion), organic chemicals mainly for industrial and pharmaceutical purposes (USD 671 million), machinery and mechanical appliances (USD 337 million) and fish (USD 100 million) of which 42% was dried cod. EFTA's top imports consisted of gold (USD 1.68 billion), aluminium oxide (USD 628 million), soya proteins (USD 243 million), and coffee, tea and spice (USD 202 million). Other important imports were soya beans (USD 114 million) and fresh beef and other meats (USD 126 million).