

EFTA Free Trade Agreements with Colombia and Peru to enter into force on 1 July 2011

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Following treaties already concluded with Mexico (2001) and Chile (2004), four EFTA Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) will now be effective with Latin American countries.

EFTA commenced joint free trade negotiations with Colombia and Peru in 2007. After separating the processes in 2008, the two FTAs were signed in November 2008 (with Colombia) and in June 2010 (with Peru). Since then, the two Latin American partners, along with Liechtenstein and Switzerland, have completed their ratification procedures, allowing for the entry into force of both FTAs on 1 July 2011 between the respective parties.

The FTAs have a broad coverage and improve market access for industrial goods, agricultural products and fish, as well as for service providers (in the case of Colombia) and investors. They also give enhanced access to government procurement markets and include provisions on intellectual property rights, competition, transparency, dispute settlement and cooperation.

Merchandise trade between EFTA and Colombia and Peru has been increasing at a steady pace over the last ten years, with an average annual growth of 14% and 17% respectively. In 2010, two-way trade between EFTA and Colombia was valued at USD 525 million, and between EFTA and Peru at USD 392 million. EFTA's most important exports to Colombia and Peru consist of pharmaceuticals, machinery, organic chemicals and medical equipment, while coffee, fishmeal, oils, fruits and nuts are the most important imports.

Apart from their agreements with the European Union, the EFTA States have now concluded 23 FTAs with a total of 32 partner countries worldwide.