

CHAPTER 9

INSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 9.1

Joint Committee

1. The Parties hereby establish the Joint EFTA-Hong Kong, China Committee comprising representatives of each Party. The Parties shall be represented by senior officials delegated by them for this purpose.
2. The Joint Committee shall:
 - (a) supervise and review the implementation of this Agreement;
 - (b) keep under review the possibility of further removal of barriers to trade and other restrictive measures concerning trade between the EFTA States and Hong Kong, China;
 - (c) oversee the further development of this Agreement;
 - (d) supervise the work of all sub-committees and working groups established under this Agreement;
 - (e) endeavour to resolve any disagreement that may arise regarding the interpretation or application of this Agreement, without prejudice to the dispute settlement mechanism in accordance with Chapter 10; and
 - (f) consider any other matter that may affect the operation of this Agreement.
3. The Joint Committee may decide to set up such sub-committees and working groups as it considers necessary to assist it in accomplishing its tasks. Except where otherwise provided for in this Agreement, the sub-committees and working groups shall work under a mandate established by the Joint Committee.
4. The Joint Committee shall take decisions as provided for in this Agreement, and may make recommendations, by consensus.
5. The Joint Committee shall meet within one year from the entry into force of this Agreement. Thereafter, it shall meet whenever necessary but normally every two years. Its meetings shall be chaired jointly by a representative of the EFTA States and a representative of Hong Kong, China. The Joint Committee shall establish its rules of procedure.

6. Each Party may request at any time, through a notice in writing to the other Parties, that a special meeting of the Joint Committee be held. Such a meeting shall take place within 30 days from the date of receipt of the request, unless the Parties agree otherwise.

7. The Joint Committee shall consider proposals for amendments to this Agreement submitted by any Party. The Joint Committee may decide to amend the Annexes and Appendices to this Agreement, and subject to paragraph 8, it may set forth the date on which such a decision shall enter into force. Amendments to other parts of this Agreement shall be accepted and enter into force in accordance with Article 11.5.

8. If a representative of a Party in the Joint Committee has accepted a decision relating to the amendment to an Annex or Appendix in accordance with paragraph 7 subject to the fulfilment of its domestic legal requirements, the decision shall enter into force on the date that the last Party notifies that its internal requirements have been fulfilled, unless the decision itself specifies a later date. The Joint Committee may decide that the decision shall enter into force for those Parties that have fulfilled their internal requirements, provided that Hong Kong, China is one of those Parties.