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## Philippines

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### **EFTA-Philippines Free Trade Agreement Signed**

**Report Categories:**

Trade Policy Monitoring

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**Report Highlights:**

The Philippines and Member States of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland – signed a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on April 28, 2016. The EFTA-Philippines FTA abolishes all customs duties on industrial products as of the entry into force of the Agreement, whereas the Philippines will gradually lower or abolish its duties on the vast majority of such products. The Agreement also provides for tariff concessions on agricultural products. The EFTA-Philippines FTA will enter into force after completion of the necessary internal procedures for ratification by the Parties, a timeline for which has not been defined.

**General Information:**

On April, 28, 2016, representatives from the Member States of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Philippines signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in Bern, Switzerland. The EFTA is an intergovernmental organization set up for the promotion of free trade and economic integration composed of Member States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

First launched in March 2015, FTA negotiations concluded in February 2016, and built upon a Joint Declaration on Cooperation signed by the EFTA States and the Philippines in June 2014.

The EFTA-Philippines FTA is a broad-based agreement that covers trade in goods (industrial and agricultural goods, fish and other marine products), rules of origin, trade facilitation, SPS, TBT, trade in services, investment, competition, protection of intellectual property rights, government procurement and sustainable development. The FTA abolishes all customs duties on industrial products, whereas the Philippines will gradually lower or abolish its duties on the vast majority of such products. The Agreement will enter into force after completion of the necessary internal procedures for ratification by the Parties. A Joint Committee will oversee the implementation of the FTA.

The Agreement provides for tariff concessions on both basic and agricultural products, as covered by the bilateral Annexes VIII to X of the Agreement. Specific provisions facilitating trade in fish and other marine products are included in a separate annex to the goods chapter (Annex V). Provisions abolishing export duties are contained in the Agreement, however, the Philippines have kept the possibility for such duties for logs, as set out in Annex IV.

The Agreement is provided in the following link:

<http://www.efta.int/free-trade/free-trade-agreements/philippines>

Attached is the EFTA-Philippines FTA. Annexes on specific agricultural tariff concessions can be obtained through the above link or by contacting Post (AgManila@ fas.usda.gov).