

**JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
AND THEIR MEMBER STATES; HONG KONG, CHINA; JAPAN;
REPUBLIC OF KOREA; NORWAY AND SINGAPORE**

The Negotiations on Maritime Transport Services

The attached communication has been received from the delegations of the European Communities and their Member States; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Republic of Korea; Norway and Singapore with the request that it be circulated to Members of the Council for Trade in Services.

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1. Safe, reliable and competitive maritime transport services benefit the economy as a whole, and are key factors of efficiency for the production of both goods and services. It is estimated that 80 per cent of world trade in volume terms is carried by vessel. Maritime transport is thus an important facilitator of world trade, and this role becomes even more apparent and crucial in an expanded and diversified world trade system. A proper treatment of this sector in the world trade system through the GATS Agreement is thus essential.
 2. As a result of the Uruguay Round and the negotiations in the Negotiating Group on Maritime Transport Services (NGMTS), the Council for Trade in Services adopted on 28 June 1996 the Decision on Maritime Transport Services (hereinafter "the Decision") which decided to suspend the negotiations and to resume them with the commencement of comprehensive negotiations on services. The negotiations on trade in services have commenced since the beginning of year 2000, and have been proceeding according to the "roadmap" document agreed at the Special Session of the Council for Trade in Services in May 2000.
 3. Considering the progress of the negotiations on trade in services, we find it appropriate to address the issue of maritime transport services. We should try to seek solutions that would offer meaningful progress for multilateral liberalization in this important sector, and thus support the liberalization objectives of the multilateral trading system.
 4. We look forward to real and meaningful liberalization and commitments during the course of negotiations. This liberalization should be premised on the fundamental principles of the GATS. In considering the most efficient way to tackle the subject matter, we believe that we should not discard the previous work done in the run up to the Decision. The Members presenting this statement subscribe to liberal policies for maritime transport services, and wish such policies to prevail more broadly in the GATS. The starting point of further liberalization in this sector should be based on the Decision.
 5. We call on Members to express their views on the matter for the coming second phase of negotiations.
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