Resolution 425 (1969)[1]

Reply to the 9th annual report of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Thanks the European Free Trade Association for the transmission of its 9th annual report ;

2. Congratulates the Association and its associate Finland on having added to the virtual removal of tariff barriers and quotas on industrial goods originating and traded within the area, definite progress in the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade ;

3. Is nevertheless convinced that experience of the abolition of tariffs and quotas in the Association has shown that non-tariff barriers to trade are of immensely greater extent and importance than has been supposed in the past, and that their eliminination frequently raises highly complex problems ;

4. Consequently, while recognising the substantial efforts that are currently being made by EFTA to deal with at least the more urgent of these problems, calls on the Association to take a fresh look at the whole field with a view to more closely adapting resources and working methods to the magnitude of the problems remaining to be tackled ;

5. Recalling the warm welcome it gave in Resolutions 324 of 1966, 350 of 1967 and 388 of 1968 to the decision of the Ministerial Council of EFTA "to review and analyse the economic impact of the present divergence between the two trading groups in Europe, with its waste of existing and potential resources", and continuing to be convinced of the importance of there being an authoritative study on those economic consequences, would regret any departure from the spirit of the original ministerial mandate,

6. Believes that the work of the Association in the field of compulsory marking regulations should take more account than hitherto of the need for protecting consumers against the possibility of misleading claims or descriptions being applied to goods offered for sale ;

7. Expresses its appreciation of the action of the Association in giving full weight to the request made in Resolution 350 of 1967 that the actual texts of formal decisions taken by the EFTA Council, where EFTA businessmen and merchants need to be informed of these in order to plan their activities, should be published in an annex to the EFTA bulletin or the EFTA annual report ;

8. Recalling the views it expressed in Resolution 388 of 1968 on the vital necessity for parliamentarians in democracies to have at their disposal the fullest information on which to base their judgment ; convinced that this same principle also applies to those having a professional or other direct interest in the more technical aspects of the Association's activities, believes that the time has now come for a re-examination of the Association's information possibilities with a view to ensuring that greater emphasis than hitherto is placed on furnishing additional information to the above categories of persons,

9. Warmly welcomes the application by Iceland for accession to EFTA, and trusts that the negotiations now under way between Iceland and EFTA will be brought to a rapid and successful conclusion.

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1. Assembly debate on 3 October 1969 (15th Sitting) (see Doc. 2622Doc. 2622, report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development). Text adopted by the Assembly on 3 October 1969 (15th Sitting).