GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE
Fourth Round of Tariff Negotiations

Statement made by Dr. Wolfgang Ernst,
Deputy Director of the External Relations Division
of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community,
at the Public Session on 19 January 1956

The High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community is glad to take part for the first time in a general conference for the reduction of customs duties within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Under the Treaty constituting the ECSC, the High Authority, acting upon instructions adopted by the Council of Ministers, shall act for the Member States as a group in negotiations with the governments of third countries on overall economic and commercial relations concerning coal and steel.

Under the above-mentioned provisions of the Treaty, the governments of the six Member States have decided jointly and in agreement with the High Authority to accept the proposal submitted by the Austrian Government at the Tenth Session of the Contracting Parties in November last. This proposal, which was supported by the Contracting Parties, was aimed at opening tariff negotiations within the framework and according to the rules of the GATT on some Treaty products. The High Authority will negotiate on behalf of the governments of the six Member States.

The High Authority, acting upon its instructions, would also be prepared to extend the scope of these negotiations to all other countries which might be interested in such negotiations.

In participating in the present conference, the High Authority and the Member States of the Community are aware of the fact that this new experience will give them a very difficult task from the technical point of view, but we shall for our part do our best to bring our contribution to a reciprocal reduction of tariffs in relation with Treaty products. We are therefore ready to achieve those aims which are common to the Treaty constituting the Community and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

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