AUSTRIA LIBERALIZES IMPORTS, INCLUDING ITEMS OF EXPORT INTEREST TO LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The Austrian authorities have informed the GATT secretariat that Austria has undertaken a series of liberalization measures at the end of 1966. Apart from the limitations applied on cotton textiles, under the long-term cotton textile arrangement, Austria has liberalized all remaining restrictions on imports in the industrial field, with the exception of only three products. Nearly all of the products which are to be freed from import restrictions are of export interest to less-developed countries. These include matches; monumental building stone and articles thereof; certain types of brooms and brushes; jute yarn; woven fabrics of jute; certain carpets and carpeting and rugs; and sacks and bags of jute. Other products of export interest to less-developed countries, which Austria has liberalized at the end of the year, are chairs and furniture, mirrors of plate glass and electric accumulators.

The three products, referred to above, on which a final decision on liberalization has not been taken by the Austrian Government are lignite; penicillin and other antibiotics, and medicaments containing antibiotics; and cinematographic films, exposed and developed. The Austrian authorities consider the maintenance of quantitative restrictions on antibiotics as essential in the national interest, while some protection for the film industry is required for both economic and cultural reasons.