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ECONOMIC REFORM IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE ENCOURAGED  
THROUGH NEW GATT TRAINING COURSE

To assist the integration of Central and East European countries into the multilateral trading system, the GATT Secretariat has begun its first Special Trade Policy Course designed specifically for officials from Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the USSR and Yugoslavia. The course is financed by the Swiss Federal Government and will take place in Geneva from 27 May to 26 July 1991.

The 24 visiting officials, nominated by their respective governments, currently hold, or are expected to hold, influential responsibilities in the formulation of foreign trade policies in their countries. This special course is designed to help officials prepare themselves for their work in national administrations, and will give special emphasis to the specific needs of these countries which are in transition from centrally-planned to market-oriented economies.

Commenting today on the new course, Mr. Arthur Dunkel, Director-General of GATT, said:

"It is vitally important that economic reform is reinforced and sustained by integration into the multilateral trading system. If we want the countries of Eastern and Central Europe to succeed in their efforts to establish market-oriented economies, they will need to be helped to create outward-looking trade regimes based on undistorted internal and external competition. The new training course is one attempt by GATT to lay the basis for such reform."

The course will provide detailed analyses of trade policy instruments and will explain strategies for efficient foreign trade policies, including balance of payments, the adjustment process, and the interaction between international monetary policy and international trade policy. GATT's framework for international trade will be covered in depth, including the overall objectives of continuing trade liberalization and improved market access. The trainees will also familiarize themselves with various sectoral negotiations, such as those on agriculture and textiles, in the Uruguay Round.

During the course, participants will undertake a study tour in Switzerland which will include visits to industries and institutions connected with foreign trade. Other activities will include the preparation of practical work, participation in seminars, a workshop on negotiating techniques and attendance at official meetings. Among the lecturers will be members of the GATT Secretariat as well as academics and senior officials from government delegations and international organizations.

In addition to this special course, the GATT Secretariat will continue to organize twice-yearly courses to help developing-country officials achieve a deeper understanding of trade policy matters and to acquire an up-to-date knowledge of the GATT. In recent years, particular attention has been given to the Uruguay Round negotiations. Since the start of the programme in 1955, some 1,195 officials from 114 countries and ten regional organizations have attended the regular courses.

Note to editors

- Bulgaria: Observer to GATT Council since 1967; its request in 1986 for accession to GATT is being considered by special working party.
- Czech and Slovak Federal Republic: One of the founding members of GATT.
- Hungary: Member of GATT since 1973, and member of Cairns Group involved in agricultural negotiations in the Uruguay Round; first, and so far only, central/east European country to be reviewed under the Trade Policy Review Mechanism. Has announced its intention to re-negotiate its Protocol of Accession as an emerging market-oriented economy.
- Poland: Member of GATT since 1967. Is currently re-negotiating its Protocol of Accession as an emerging market-oriented economy.
- Romania: Member of GATT since 1971.
- USSR: Observer to GATT Council since May 1990, and on the Committees on Import Licensing and Anti-Dumping since March and April 1991 respectively.
- Yugoslavia: Member of GATT since 1966.



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