

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, JAPAN, KOREA, MONGOLIA, AND THE SEPARATE CUSTOMS TERRITORY OF TAIWAN, PENGHU, KINMEN AND MATSU

The following communication, dated 9 May 2006, is being circulated at the request of the Delegations of the European Communities, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu.

PROPOSAL ON RELEASE TIME OF GOODS

1. This submission is to present the key elements on the release time of goods which are summarized from existing proposals. Also identified are the elements that need further discussions among Members for greater clarification and specification.

I. KEY ELEMENTS OF RELEASE TIME

- Each Member calculates and publishes its own average time for release of goods on a periodic basis, based on a common standard such as the WCO Time Release Study.
- Members continuously endeavour to reduce the average release time.
- For legitimate objectives, Members retain the right to delay the release of goods.

II. ELEMENTS THAT NEED FURTHER DISCUSSION

- Publication methods (e.g., website), publication frequency (e.g., once a year).
- Commitment of Members to provide traders, upon request, with reason(s) for the delay in release, to the extent possible, without impeding the pursuance of legitimate policy objectives.
- Special and Differential Treatment
 - Longer implementation time, temporary exemptions for developing countries and least developed countries.
- Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
 - Assessment of needs and priorities (e.g., human resource training, cooperation with relevant international organizations in conducting time release surveys).