

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES – CONDITIONS FOR THE GRANTING  
OF TARIFF PREFERENCES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Communication from the Chairman of the Panel

The following communication, dated 22 September 2003, addressed to the Chairman of the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), is circulated in accordance with Article 12.9 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU).

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Article 12.8 of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) provides that the period in which a panel shall conduct its examination, from the date that the composition and terms of reference of the panel have been agreed upon until the date the final report is issued to the parties to the dispute, shall, as a general rule, not exceed six months.

Article 12.9 of the DSU provides that when a panel considers that it cannot issue its report within six months, it shall inform the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) in writing of the reasons for the delay together with an estimate of the period within which it will issue its report.

The Panel on *European Communities – Conditions for the Granting of Tariff Preferences to Developing Countries* (WT/DS246) was established by the DSB on 27 January 2003 and composed on 6 March 2003.

However, due to the complexity of the matter, the Panel could not complete its work within six months.

The Panel expects to issue its final report to the parties at the end of October.

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