

E. United States

The U.S. government does not have an official policy, guidelines or a special agency designed to cope with the CT obligations faced by American companies. Officials in the U.S. Department of Commerce state the policy towards commercial CT deals is neither to actively encourage nor discourage them unless sensitive commodities are involved. The pervasive attitude is that the growth of CT is a regressive trade development -- a deviation from the ideal of multi-lateral trade relations rather than simply a tool in a country's export policy.

The U.S. Department of Commerce publishes an information guide for businessmen and periodically organizes seminars at which executives exchange views on their countertrade experiences. Two major pieces of legislation, now before Congress, the Stevenson and Danforth bills, are designed to encourage export trading houses to become an important vehicle of U.S. trade expansion. Specifically, the bills would:

- allow U.S. banks to own equity in trading companies, giving trading houses links with the banks expertise and overseas market intelligence networks
- provide advance antitrust clearing for trading companies, making it possible for the formation of export consortia of U.S. manufacturers capable of absorbing a wide range of CT goods
- make available Export-Import Bank guarantees on their accounts receivable and export inventories
- allow trading companies to defer taxes on part of their profits
- authorize state and local authorities to form or participate in trading companies

F. Austria: Liaison Office for Foreign Trade (Evidenzbuero)

1. Origin: Austria's Evidenzbuero was established in 1968 as a private, non-profit and independent association of exporters, transit dealers, bankers and other institutions interested in improving east-west trade. The three founding official bodies were:

- the Austrian Federal Chamber of Commerce
- the Minister of Trade
- the Austrian Association of Industrialists

2. Objective: The principal objective of the Evidenzbuero is to provide a wide variety of services to its members when they are faced with unexpected difficulties in their export business. Related to this general aim is the strategy of helping its members to increase their countertrade with the socialist countries and with other world markets, preferably in cooperation with other competent institutions.

3. Organization: The head office is located in Vienna with branch offices in Bucharest, Sofia and Warsaw. All members are entitled to the services of the office free of charge but are obliged to pay a prescribed membership fee and reimburse costs. With a small staff, Evidenzbuero does not specialize in any one product or country. Since it is not backed by any financial institution, members are referred to the various local banks for the financial aspects of trade transactions.