

Foreign Ministry of Ekara

Country Background:

The country of Ekara has a population of 62 million people living within 32,000 square miles. Ekara has recently undergone a revolution after 25 years of dictatorial rule by a military junta and is slowly switching to a democratic form of government. It is safe to assume that Ekara, though wanting to follow a democratic process, has not yet achieved a complete governmental transition. The economy is predominantly agrarian and industry based. Textiles are the most profitable of the industries and represent an economically powerful group with ties to the former government.



Most citizens consider the decentralization of control in the country to be a positive step as do most of their neighbors, but this has made the government weaker as various parties struggle to establish power. A remnant of the dictatorship that once controlled Ekara are the many gangs that still operate in factories. The gangs manufacture and ship counterfeit products from the same factories where the authentic items are made.

Ekara shares a cultural history with the neighboring country of Grenesia and has strong economic ties. Many factories operating along their shared border produce both legitimate and counterfeit goods, some of which are sold in Beyaria. One noteworthy example is the production of designer Monrui bags and counterfeit Monasa bags — both are produced and shipped from factories in Ekara and Grenesia.

Lucrative deals exist between several clothing brands and fashion houses and factories in the country. However, there are concerns about the safety of these factories and working conditions for employees. Ekara has rules in place to protect workers from unsafe conditions, but enforcement has not been a priority. Unless stricter counterfeit and labor regulations are enforced in Ekara, it will be difficult to stop counterfeit production and trade in the region.

There are some signs of positive change. In light of Ekara's economic growth and liberalization, the country is working to achieve **World Trade Organization (WTO)** member state status with some support from the United States, a major trading partner. To be accepted as a member, Ekara must accept all **WTO** regulations, including improved working conditions, **intellectual property rights** agreements, and anti-counterfeit laws. **WTO** status would allow Ekara's manufacturing industry increased access to the global market, but it would not be easy to enact these regulations quickly.

Opening Position:

- You would like the Department of State to work within the region to create greater stability.
- You are open to increasing your involvement with NGOs such as SALE.
- You want to become a member of the WTO.
- You want to continue to get contracts from Beyaria's designers for your factories.

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Questions to Consider:

- What steps should Ekara take towards enforcing laws against counterfeit trade across its borders?
- How might the WTO assist manufacturers in Ekara to strengthen their economic opportunities?
- Why is greater stability in the region important for Ekara?
- In what specific ways can SALE assist Ekara in establishing safer factory working conditions?
- Is there any way to leverage assistance or a better relationship with Beyaria?
- Should Ekara sever its close ties with Grenesia?

