



EU-Pacific EPA: negotiators meet in Brussels (23 September – 2 October 2009)

European and Pacific ACP representatives met in Brussels at technical level from 23 September to 2 October 2009 to negotiate a regional Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). Discussions were fruitful and positions could be narrowed on a number of issues. Key aspects that require further discussions are trade in goods and fisheries as well as services and a number of specific provisions in the agreement. Four Pacific countries (Niue, Samoa, Cook Islands and Micronesia) presented market access offers for trade in goods which will be jointly reviewed. As regards services, the EC considers ways for granting sufficient flexibility to allow Pacific countries to undertake commitments in a flexible way whereas Pacific region proposes a general rendez-vous clause. The next technical negotiation round is tentatively scheduled for early 2010.

Once finalized, the regional EPA should replace the interim EPA that was initialled at the end of 2007 and signed with Papua New Guinea on 30 July 2009. Fiji also initialled the Agreement in 2007 and will sign at a later stage. The interim Agreement focuses on trade in goods and also includes provisions on trade facilitation and sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

BACKGROUND

Total Pacific ACP^[1] (PACP)-EU trade in 2008 was around €1 billion which represents a very small share of EU imports and exports – around 0.05% and 0.02% respectively. Their most important export products to the EU are animal/vegetable oils, sugar, coffee, tea & spices and copper. The EU's main exports are mechanical machinery, electrical machinery, vehicles and oil. PNG and Fiji are the EU's main trading partners – together they comprise 83% of total EU–Pacific trade volumes.

For further information please log on to:

http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/regions/acp/regneg_en.htm

Source: EPA Flash News, European Commission, DG Trade, 05/10/09

^[1] These include 14 states: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu. Another ACP (Timor Leste) has observer status in EPA negotiations. There are also four EU Overseas Countries and Territories: New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna (France) and Pitcairn (UK).