

EPA APE Flash news from EU Trade



European and West African negotiators met in Brussels at technical and senior official level from 22 to 26 March 2010, to discuss the way ahead in Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) talks. Progress was made on West Africa's market access offer and on the EPA Development Programme (PAPED). Compromises were also found on other aspects such as agriculture and fisheries. Both parties are hopeful to be able to finalise negotiations with a view to concluding the deal later this year.

Additional work is needed to hammer out differences on issues such as rules of origin, the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause or the link with the Cotonou agreement. Forthcoming EU-WA contacts include a meeting on agricultural subsidies in Abuja on April 28th, a meeting on rules of origin at the end of May, a negotiation round at technical level in Ouagadougou early June with a Senior Officials' and Chief Negotiators' meetings to follow later in the year.

BACKGROUND

More than half of EU-WA trade (55%) is represented by oil from Nigeria. The EU mainly exports industrial goods including mechanical machinery (14%), electrical machinery (9%) and vehicles (7%) to the region. Excluding oil from Nigeria, the region's main exports to the EU are represented by cocoa (11%), iron (8%) and rubber (6%). Two West African countries, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, initialled bilateral "stepping stone (or "interim") EPAs" with the EU at the end of 2007. The interim EPA with Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire) was signed on 26 November 2008.

For more information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/wider-agenda/development/economic-partnerships/negotiations/>

