



***EU-West Africa EPA: negotiators meet in Brussels (21-25 September 2009)***



***European and West African negotiators met in Brussels from 21 to 25 September to discuss the way forward towards a regional Economic Partnership Agreement.***

***The talks, at technical and senior-officials' level, addressed West Africa's market access offer and other issues such as agriculture. Both sides converged on the need to include a non discrimination clause in the agreement. Regional levies, development co-operation (the EPA Development Programme or PAPED) and rules of origin were also part of an agenda that both sides consider important for their future relations.***

***Further talks are scheduled to take place on 23 and 24 October in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) and at senior-officials' level on 6 November (venue to be decided).***

**Background**

EU-West Africa bilateral trade is represented by import-export of goods worth €43.6 billion (both ways, 2008 data), however more than half of this is in EU-Nigeria trade (oil). Excluding Nigeria, the EU mainly exports industrial goods including mechanical machinery (14%), electrical machinery (9%) and vehicles (7%) to the region. Excluding oil from Nigeria (55% of West African exports) 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.

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[http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/regions/acp/regneg\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/regions/acp/regneg_en.htm)

**Source:** EPA Flash News, DG Trade, European Commission, 30-Sept 2009