



## EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
TO BARBADOS AND THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Regional Integration, Political, Trade, Press & Information

Bridgetown, 12 August 2015  
WL Ares(2015)

**Speech delivered by Head of the European Union Delegation to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean Ambassador Mikael Barfod at the annual general meeting of the Association of Caribbean Copyright Societies, held at Infinity on the Beach Hotel, on Wednesday 12 August 2015.**

It's a pleasure to be asked to give some brief remarks at this annual meeting of the Association of Caribbean Copyright Societies.

Every one of us has **copyright issues**. I, for one, is an amateur photographer, and I like to keep my pictures close to my chest so they do not turn up on everyone's social media sites. Like others, I have discovered that technology can help and I now keep copies safely in the clouds.

However technology can also be a curse for copyright owners, not least in the creative industries. **Musicians**, more than most, have struggles with pirate cassettes, fake CDs, and more recently unauthorised files sharing and streaming that does not generate reasonable revenue.

Some of you might be asking what is the **EU's role in copyright** or why is the EU interested in the work of the Association of Caribbean Copyright Societies? The EU's interest comes from the recognition of the enormous value the creative and cultural industries can play in the diversification of Caribbean economies and as such we have provided much needed financial support to further the development of these vital sectors. No other industries require the protection of copyright more as I just illustrated.

But looking at it from a narrower perspective, the EU's present involvement in the development of the cultural industry in particular, centres mainly on the now well-known **Economic Partnership Agreement or EPA** signed with CARIFORUM Member States in 2008, which contains a protocol on cultural cooperation. Therefore, in essence the EPA recognises cultural industries as an economic sector. Before I go further let me thank the Barbadian authorities for their ratification of the EPA last month. This means that of the countries covered by the Delegation it only leaves Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis to ratify the Agreement. Let me say that the inclusion of the cultural protocol was the first time that the EU had made such a concession to a sector for which it did not

normally provide trade commitments. This cultural protocol in the EPA provides for the exchange of cultural activities, goods and services; the development of best practices in the field of intellectual property rights protection; training and movement of artistes and cultural practitioners, among other endeavours.

When we speak about cultural practitioners, the field is varied and includes musicians, theatrical producers, authors, poets, sculptors, designers and others.

In addition, the scope of the cultural protocol includes the provision of expertise in the protection of **historic sites**, bearing in mind the protocol is based on the concepts of the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of diversity of cultural expressions. And we all know that the environs of Bridgetown have been designated a World Heritage site. In St. Lucia you have the Pitons; Antigua and Barbuda Nelson's Dockyard. Therefore there is room for dialogue with experts from EU Member States on matters pertaining to aspects of your heritage.

Under the EPA entertainers are also accommodated as Contractual Services Providers or employees of service firms, the specific aspects of which you can research for yourself by reading Article 83.

Therefore it is within the above context that I am delighted to say that through the European Union's support over the past three years, approximately **6,273 individuals in the creative and cultural industries** have benefitted under activities executed by Caribbean Export. These activities include technical and financial assistance, training and certification as well as export promotion missions across the Region and to Europe. Caribbean artistes have made their presence felt at the Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival in France, the World Music Expo (Womex) in Denmark and Iberoamerican Handicraft Seminar in Colombia. I also recall that in May of this year the producers of the Barbadian film, *Vigilante*, participated in the renowned Cannes Film Festival. These are the activities that are important to you as you try to sell your services to the world.

Add to all this the decision by the EU in May to sign **short-stay visa waiver agreements** with Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, allowing citizens of these countries to visit most EU Member States for up to 90 days within a six month period. Of course Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, as well as St. Kitts and Nevis had already been granted this status. Therefore you can see that the EU is committed to creating the necessary environment to facilitate the development of the creative and cultural industries.

Before I go let me reassure those of you who may be sitting there thinking of the considerable amount of **work yet to be done in support of the further development of the creative and cultural industries**, including in the area of intellectual property and copyright.

The EU has foreseen this in its co-operation with the Caribbean and has provided the region with **EUR102 million in grant aid under the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund** for the period 2014-2020. This assistance is specifically earmarked, in its broadest sense, to support regional economic co-operation and integration, including private sector development. In this regard we will be

continuing our very successful partnership with Caribbean Export, and are soon to begin the formulation of a new private sector development programme. Please feel free to discuss with Caribbean Export in areas in which you require support and the ways in which that support can be tailored.

EPA is occasionally criticised for not moving forward fast enough. However few dispute that it is the most generous trade deal ever between any group of developed and developing countries. However, the Caribbean and especially **Caribbean companies** have to take advantage of the free access to European markets. Being small, the Caribbean countries need to take advantage of the clauses and aid that encourage regional integration within CARIFORUM. EPA is more than an paper agreement that we can applaud once and for all; it is an action plan for trade and more regional integration, that depends on the parties to act.

As I conclude I would like to thank the Association for the valuable work it is doing to protect the unique intellectual property in the Caribbean and wish you further success, as it is only through your individual and collective endeavours that the creative and cultural industries can really fully soar to even greater heights.