

BACKGROUND

On 27 November 2007 the Eastern African Community (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) agreed on a region-to-region interim EPA with the EU. This interim agreement (sometimes called a Framework EPA) mainly covers trade in goods and is a stepping stone towards a full EPA.

Main features of the interim EPA

- Duty free quota free access into the EU for all imports from EAC, with transition periods for rice and sugar
- Asymmetric and gradual opening of the EAC to EU goods, taking full account of the differences in levels of development between them and the EU (see below)
- Trade defence provisions with safeguards allowing each party to reintroduce duties if imports of the other party disturb or threaten to disturb their economy
- Rules of Origin (subject to review in the full EPA negotiations)
- Dispute avoidance and settlement provisions (more elaborate provisions will be negotiated for the full EPA)
- A chapter on fisheries (see below under "other features")

Goods covered by liberalisation

All imports from EAC countries have entered the EU duty and quota free since the 1st of January 2008 (transition period for rice expired in 2010 and for sugar will expire in 2015). Over the next 25 years, EAC will liberalise 82.6 percent of imports from the EU by value (65 percent by 2010, 80 percent by 2023 and the remainder by 2033).

Goods excluded from liberalisation

The EAC decided to exclude the following products from liberalisation; agricultural products, wines and spirits, chemicals, plastics, wood based paper, textiles and clothing, footwear, ceramic products, glassware, articles of base metal and vehicles.

Other features

The agreement contains an extensive fisheries chapter, mainly aiming to reinforce cooperation on the sustainable use of resources (such as resource assessment and management, monitoring environmental, economic and social impacts, conformity with existing national laws and relevant international instruments, effective).

For the latest state of play, please see:

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

For dates of EPA negotiating Rounds see:

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