

European Commission presents roadmap for negotiating trade agreements with ACP countries - Strasbourg, 23 October 2007

The European Commission has issued a communication to the Council and the European Parliament on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), setting out clearly the way forward and the issues at stake to conclude these important trade pacts. The Commission sees full EPAs as essential to enable ACP states to play a full part in international trade. The end of 2007 represents a firm deadline for negotiating the goods market access element of the EPAs, and the communication deals with how the Commission intends to work with the ACP to address this deadline while still securing full EPA content and full regional coverage. The communication also answers the important questions this raises for development cooperation, Rules of Origin and market access in the event full EPAs are not concluded.

Speaking to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on the subject of EPAs, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson summed up the Commission's ambition: "Our objective remains to conclude comprehensive, full economic partnership agreements with all interested ACP countries and regions. These agreements have a WTO-compatible goods agreement at their core, but also cover other issues. ...Those completing these full EPAs will benefit from the full development potential of these agreements."

Read Peter Mandelson's [Speech at the INTA Committee](#)

Read the [Communication](#)