

ESA-EU Interim EPA

EPA COMMITTEE

7th Meeting

BRUSSELS, 22 January 2019

Joint Communiqué

The seventh meeting of the EPA Committee under the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) between the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) states - Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe and the EU was held in Brussels on 22 January 2019. The two Sub-Committees, the Customs Cooperation Committee and the Joint Development Committee, also met on the same day.

The Parties reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the iEPA as an instrument to foster economic development and strengthen regional integration.

The Parties took note that the Comoros has ratified the ESA-EU iEPA.

The Parties also reaffirmed their commitment to coordinate efforts to ensure an effective implementation of the ESA iEPA and in this regard agreed to put in place a Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism. The ESA Party took note of the concept paper submitted by the EU and agreed to submit comments thereon by end of February 2019.

The Parties took note of the status of implementation of tariff reduction and modification of the tariff nomenclature respectively and agreed to continue exchanging information on these matters.

The EU updated the Committee on the state of play of the EU internal procedures for adoption of the draft Decision on technical amendments to the Protocol on Rules of Origin of the ESA-EU iEPA, which would be adopted by the EPA Committee by mid 2019.

The ESA Party thanked the EU for the swift adoption of the decision relating to the derogation for salted snoek in accordance with the Agreement.

The EU reminded the ESA partner the need to notify the European Commission the details of the ACP Joint Undertaking on Administrative Cooperation in order to benefit from the cumulation of products origin foreseen in the Protocol on Rules of Origin. The EU encouraged the ESA Party to fulfil this requirement.

The Parties reviewed progress relating to the accompanying measures undertaken by the four countries and the implementation status of financial support provided under the

10th and 11th EDF. Mauritius requested that the implementation of the project relating to the Intellectual Property Development Plan be unlocked.

The Parties welcomed the decision to initiate discussions on the deepening of the iEPA and the setting up of a coordination mechanism to assist ESA side in the negotiations. The EU agreed to consider request for increasing the sum of 1 million EUR for the coordination mechanism and the number of meetings to adequately prepare for the negotiations on the deepening of the iEPA.

The ESA side requested the EU to consider reallocating funds from unutilised sources to assist the ESA side in the implementation of the iEPA with a view to unlocking and fully availing of the opportunities thereunder.

The ESA Party made a request for a sensitisation workshop on the External Investment Plan which could be held together for instance with a business forum.

The ESA side reiterated their commitment to the development of internationally agreed standards for cooperation between tax jurisdictions and appeal to the EU Code of Conduct Group to take into consideration the efforts that ESA States are making in this regard.

The eighth meeting of the EPA Committee will take place in Seychelles during the last quarter of 2019 at a date to be jointly decided.

The meeting took place in a very cordial atmosphere.