

**Question for written answer E-004408/2016**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Adam Szejnfeld (PPE)**

Subject: Implementation of the Agreement establishing an Association between the EU and the countries of Central America

In June 2012, the European Union and six Central American countries (Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala) signed an Association Agreement. Based on the three pillars of political dialogue, cooperation and trade, it is primarily intended to support economic growth, democracy and political stability in the countries of Central America.

Part IV of the Agreement, relating to trade, in addition to establishing a free-trade area provides for a more predictable environment for trade through a mediation mechanism for non-tariff barriers, a bilateral dispute resolution mechanism and special preferences for banana exports to the EU, which are important for the countries of Central America. There are also rules relating to trade in services, intellectual property protection, foreign direct investment, public procurement and competition policy. The strengthening of regional integration also aims to create a single import duty for the whole region and a single administrative document for customs authorities. The Agreement is particularly important because of the changes to the EU's common system of tariff preferences, which came into force on 1 January 2014.

How does the Commission assess the first two years of application of Part IV of the Agreement establishing an Association between the EU and the countries of Central America, and what does it believe should possibly be changed to improve its effectiveness?