

**Question for written answer E-001841/2018
to the Commission
Rule 130
Adam Szejnfeld (PPE)**

Subject: The impact of the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area on relations with the European Union

On 21 March 2018 at the African Union (AU) summit in Kigali, 44 countries established the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Ultimately, the agreement is to be signed by all 55 AU member states, bringing together 1.2 billion people with a total GDP of over USD 2 trillion.

It should be noted that, due to the colonial past of the continent, main trade routes ran to Europe and the USA, and not to neighbouring countries. This is one of the reasons why intra-African trade is still relatively limited. In 2010, it accounted for only 10.2% of the continent's total turnover. It is estimated that through the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement, trade between African countries could increase by up to 52% by 2022. By reducing trade barriers, such as the abolition of import tariffs and non-tariff barriers, African countries are hoping for the development of business within the continent.

The European Union's relations with African countries are based on trade agreements with individual countries and regional groups of countries, as well as on development cooperation. Therefore, can the Commission say:

- 1) In its view, how will the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area affect relations between the European Union and African countries, particularly in the context of the discussions on what the post-Cotonou partnership will look like?