



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Delegation to the Cariforum — EU Parliamentary Committee

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REPORT

by David Martin

Chairman of the

Delegation to the CARIFORUM — EU Parliamentary Committee

2nd Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee

3 April to 4 April 2013

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

A. Introduction

This Parliamentary Committee, set up under the only full Economic Partnership Agreement in place, met for the second time, after the first meeting which was held in Brussels in June 2011. The first day was mostly dedicated to discussions and internal procedures. The Committee adopted its Rules of Procedure, as well as a joint declaration, following vivid discussions in a positive atmosphere. The Committee also heard several interventions from the private sector.

During the second day, participants had the opportunity to participate in field trips to the university as well as to former sugar producing areas, where the European Union is now supporting projects to achieve diversification.

Next meeting of the Committee will be in Brussels in spring 2014.

The EP-delegation was led by the Chair of the DCAR (the European Parliament Delegation to the Committee), Mr David Martin (S&D) together with Vice Chair Niccolo Rinaldi (ALDE), and other members included Mr Enrique Guerrero Salom, Mr Patrice Tirolien and Mr Georg Cutas (all S&D) as well as Mr Santiago Fisas Ayala (EPP). The meeting itself was mostly chaired by the host and Co-chair for the Committee, Senator the Honourable Vasant Bharath, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment of Trinidad and Tobago. Most of the Caribbean countries were represented, many of them with their Trade Minister.

Overall assessment

The hosts made a great effort to organise a successful event, and as expressed by the chair at the debriefing meeting with EU HoMs, the discussions were conducted in a positive atmosphere and with more depth than is often the case for other debates on the EPAs. The Caribbean side showed a great commitment, and the fact that they were represented at a high level can be seen as a proof of this. At the same time, it is of course very important that the committee can fulfil its monitoring role, which includes scrutiny also of governmental implementation of the Agreement. The working modalities for the committee will still have to be developed, and they are challenging in a regional framework within the ACP, but still outside the ordinary ACP meetings, but the very active participation by the CARIFORUM directorate at the CARICOM secretariat was a welcome contribution, which will hopefully facilitate future activities.

Main issues:

The two main issues discussed, apart from the Rules of Procedure, related to the Commission proposal for a visa waiver for citizens from the region. While the agreement provides for increased mobility, it is clear that the visa requirement still poses a lot of obstacles to the fulfilment of this part of the Agreement. The proposal is now with the LIBE committee.

Another issue of concern for the Caribbean is EU's future development policy, and in particular the so called differentiation, with an increased focus on poor countries for development aid, and were several CARIFORUM countries run the risk to fall out of the system. It was however stressed that while this could be the case for the bilateral programmes, the regional programming under which EPA implementation falls, would still be maintained.

The discussions also stressed the importance of the creative industry and of sports for

economic development and diversification, while others underscored its potential for regional integration and closer relationship between EU and CARIFORUM.

B. The Joint Parliamentary Committee

Senator Vasant Bharath, host and Co-chair for the Committee as well as Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment of Trinidad and Tobago, set the tone for the meeting in his opening remarks calling attention to the “unique role” of the Parliamentary Committee and asking for a more proactive role for the institution.



David Martin, as Chair of the European Parliament delegation, described the Parliamentary Committee as “the parliamentary piece in the institutional jigsaw puzzle”, and invited everybody to make sure the agreement is put into practice. “Our joint task is to monitor the application and implementation of the EPA. We have the chance in this setting to learn how the Agreement is working on the ground, and how the other Institutions are functioning.”

First working Session



The main point under this part was to agree on the Rules of Procedure for the Committee. Article 231 of the EPA provides that the Committee shall establish its Rules of Procedure and inform the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council thereof. A first discussion had taken place in Brussels in June 2011, but the final decision was postponed. One of the main point raised in the discussion related to the concept of Co-chairs. While this is probably the practice in many Joint Parliamentary Committees, Art 231 of the Agreement

does not foresee Co-chairs, but that the Parliamentary Committee should be chaired in turn by a representative of the European Parliament and a representative of a CARIFORUM State legislature. It was decided that this will be for periods of 12 months. The secretariat will be provided by the part holding the Chair of the Committee for the same period.

Second Working Session

The second working session looked into the challenges and opportunities with the Agreement. Mr Ivan Ogando, Director-General of the CARIFORUM Directorate at the CARICOM Secretariat gave full reports from the meetings of the Trade and Development Committee and the Joint Council, held on 27 September 2012 and 26 October 2012 respectively. Amongst the issues raised were two requests to make changes to the schedule of tariff cuts (regarding age of used cars and paper), and concerns over the possibility of differentiation in development co-operation.

Mr Ogando also gave a report on the status of implementation of the Agreement, which will be up for its first five-year revision during 2013. Eight countries are now applying the tariff schedules. Almost all institutions, except the Consultative Committee, are in place. Regarding

trade in goods and services, the trend is rather negative, and FDI has fallen short of expectations. Several factors explain this, according to Mr Ogando, such as the financial crisis, structural constraints in the CARIFORUM region, preference erosion due to signature of other FTAs by the European Union, but also fewer resources under Aid for Trade than expected and long delays in disbursement of development funds which would normally be part of the Agreement.

Mr Ogando further mentioned that CARIFORUM has commissioned a study to look into the legal implications of Art 238, and the issue of *octroi de mer* was then raised in several interventions. While several of the members from the CARIFORUM side claimed that it has been applied in a discriminatory way, Mr Tirolien stressed the importance of this mechanism for the territories in question.

Both sides called attention to the considerable importance of the cultural industries, including education, sport, national heritage activities, training and exchanges, as an asset of the CARIFORUM Region as well as of the EU. Delegates were of the view that these areas are growth areas for CARIFORUM States with respect to export earnings, a point which was also stressed in the Joint Declaration, acknowledging that the “EPA is of critical importance in the Region’s strategy to further promote and commercialise the creative and sporting sectors”.

But CARIFORUM delegates were also quick to point to regulatory barriers with respect to the EU market that posed difficulties in translating market access into real market penetration. As pointed out above, the visa requirements still limit labour mobility. David Martin invited CARIFORUM delegates to give concrete examples of difficulties encountered, in order to be able to raise problems with the implementation of the provisions foreseen in the Agreement with the countries concerned. In the Joint Declaration, “members strongly welcomed and supported the proposal to lift the visa requirements for nationals of CARIFORUM States visiting the EU including the Outermost regions as an important measure to facilitate exchanges.”

Presentations

Before considering the Draft Joint Declaration, the delegates then had the opportunity to listen to various presentations. The Executive Director of the **Caribbean Export Development Agency**, Ms. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, outlined the programme of work that her Agency is rolling out, with the primary objective to support and build Caribbean brands and competitiveness across the Region and in external partners.

Five business support organizations (BSOs) shared the experiences of some of their members in breaking through and operating in the EU market and to implement the Agreement. The representative from **Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers’ Association (TTMA)** described how they are struggling to comply with regulatory standards in the EU market, and how this have made them look more and more to the Latin American market. The representative of the **Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI)** on the other hand, stressed that it is not the same to enter the market for services as for goods, and that his members still need more information and training in order to be able to profit from the opportunities. He saw joint ventures as a possibility to facilitate for CARIFORUM service providers, often small-scale, to be able to operate more efficiently and asked for the EU Helpdesk to be more adapted also to the needs of service providers.

The representative from the **Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Architects (TTIA)** described the work to conclude a Mutual Recognition Agreement, which would facilitate exchanges for architects. One challenge was that there was no single body representing architects in the CARIFORUM region, nor any regional definition or intraregional MRA. Negotiations with the European counterpart were therefore currently put on a hold, until national consultations were concluded by the end of the year, to be followed by a regional proposal.



The very enthusiastic representative from the newly created **Eurochamber in Trinidad and Tobago**, was optimistic about the opportunities created by the Agreement, and thought that it will also help to increase the competitiveness of companies in Trinidad and Tobago to compete not only on the European market, but on the global market in general.

C. Field visits

The Committee had the opportunity to visit and make a tour at the University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus. The Dean of the Faculty of Engineering presented the University and his own faculty. Founded in 1948, the University of the West Indies today has around 45.000 students, and while being linked to the University of London - all undergraduate programmes are accredited by a professional body in the UK - it collaborates with 60 universities around the world. In view of the importance of oil and gas exploitation in Trinidad and Tobago, civil and chemical engineering are important sectors, and links to the industry are very strong. Many were certainly impressed to hear that around 90% of the students will have a job 3 months after examination.

The Committee also visited Caroni, former sugar producing areas in Central Trinidad. For more than 30 years, Trinidad and Tobago enjoyed preferential treatment from the EU in the trade of cane sugar through the so-called Sugar Protocol. But with production costs among the highest in the world, it was not competitive, and in May 2008, the government took the decision to close down the state-owned sugar company Caroni in response to the EU decision to cut European subsidies. EU development aid is now contributing to diversify and develop the economic base of the former sugar-dependant areas, and to mitigate social and environmental impacts of the reform. Members had the opportunity to visit all the installations, where there is now a project to develop a Museum and an Archive, as well as a Conference and Recreation Centre.



Briefing of MEPs with EU MS HoMs



The Delegation finally had the opportunity to meet with the five EU Heads of Missions present in Port of Spain, to brief them of the discussion in the Parliamentary Committee, but also in order to be able to discuss different matters more in detail. This was followed with another session with stakeholders, primarily from the private sector, with further possibilities to discuss the challenges for the implementation of the Agreement.

Second Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Parliamentary Committee

3 April 2013

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

JOINT DECLARATION

1. The Parliamentary Delegations of the CARIFORUM States Legislatures and the European Parliament, chaired by Senator the Honourable Vasant Bharath, Trinidad and Tobago, celebrate the holding of the Second Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Parliamentary Committee in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. As set out in Article 231 of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the CARIFORUM States and the European Community and its Member States the role of this Committee is to monitor and review the implementation of the Agreement, and to be a forum for members of the European Parliament and the CARIFORUM States Legislatures to meet and exchange views.

2. The Committee adopted its Rules of Procedure, another important step in the setting up of this Parliamentary Committee, which is part of the institutional framework under the EPA. Members stressed the importance of having all the institutions in place for the proper functioning and monitoring of this Agreement. Particular reference was made to the Consultative Committee, the only Joint Institution for which membership is yet to be established. The Committee urged fulfilment of this requirement.

3. The Parliamentary Committee welcomed the outcomes of the Second Trade and Development Committee, held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 27 September 2012, as well as the Second Meeting of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council in Brussels, Belgium on 26 October 2012. Among the decisions taken was the amendment of the EPA in order to allow for incorporation of the commitments of The Bahamas into Annex IV of the EPA, which addresses Investment, Trade in Services and E-commerce. The Parliamentary Committee also took note of issues related to the treatment of certain goods of importance to CARIFORUM, urging both Sides to continue to work to bridge differences.

4. The EPA was recognized as a very important tool to promote export-led development and economic growth, in light of the opportunities to be had in the EU market. The upcoming planned review of the EPA was seen as an important opportunity to assess the gains and challenges from the Agreement's implementation to date.

5. Both Sides expressed their commitment to the effective implementation of the EPA, a partnership for sustainable development, regional integration and the creation of new commercial opportunities between CARIFORUM and the EU. In that regard they called attention to the considerable importance of the CARIFORUM Region's cultural industries, including education, sport, national heritage activities, training and exchanges, which are an asset of the Region and of the EU. This is one of the single largest growth areas with respect to export earnings, especially at a time when there has been significant reduction in traditional revenue streams. The EPA was recognized as being of critical importance in the Region's strategy to further promote and commercialise the creative and sporting sectors. The

Committee thus stressed the importance of the implementation of the Protocol on Cultural Cooperation, as a way to bring the two regions closer to each other. The Committee further noted that different actions and measures should be considered to develop it further, such as twinning projects between creative cities in both regions and the setting up of an EU-CARIFORUM Platform for the Culture and Creative Industries.

6. The Committee underscored that while the Agreement opens up new possibilities as regards the movement of persons, especially for qualified professionals, through possibilities of temporary presence of natural persons for business purpose and mutual recognition of professions, as laid out in Articles 80-85 of the Agreement, in practice regulatory barriers impinge on the realization of the Agreement's stated aims in this regard; thus posing challenges to translating market access into real market penetration. However, Members strongly welcomed and supported the proposal to lift the visa requirements for nationals of CARIFORUM States visiting the EU including the Outermost regions as an important measure to facilitate exchanges.

7. Parliamentarians emphasised that the development component is an integral part of the EPA, and that the Agreement should contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, as well as to regional cooperation and integration. The considerable reduction of funds available under the 11th EDF, as well as EU policy on differentiation in future development aid, must carefully take into consideration the implications for the economic development of the Caribbean and should not jeopardize its capacity to implement the EPA. While the EU has signalled that it will take into account the concept of vulnerability and the status of CARIFORUM States in the application of differentiation, it must indicate how it proposes to do so. The Parties acknowledged that graduating countries solely on the basis of GDP can negatively impact on the issues of poverty, good governance and democracy.

8. The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting in early spring 2014 in Brussels, Belgium.

Caribbean Delegation to the
CARIFORUM - EU Parliamentary
Committee

Vasant BHARATH
Chair

European Parliament Delegation to the
CARIFORUM - EU Parliamentary
Committee

David MARTIN
Head of European Parliament Delegation



2nd CARIFORUM - EU Joint Parliamentary Committee Meeting Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

PROGRAMME

(Version of 15 March 2013)

Tuesday, 2 April 2013

Arrival of Members

Wednesday, 3 April 2013

9.00 – 9.30 Official Opening of the 2nd EU-Cariforum JPC

- Welcome by Senator the Honourable Vasant Bharath, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment and Co-Chair of the JPC
- Remarks by Mr. David Martin, Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the JPC

Place: Hotel Hyatt Regency Trinidad, #1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)

Room: Ball room

9.30 – 12.00 First working Session

- Adoption of the Agenda
- Procedural Matters
- Adoption of the Minutes of the First Meeting
- Adoption of the Rules of Procedure governing the JPC

Place: Hotel Hyatt Regency Trinidad, #1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)

Room: Ball room

12.00 – 13.30 Luncheon hosted by Senator the Honourable Vasant Bharath, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment

Place: Hotel Hyatt Regency Trinidad, #1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)

Room: tbc

13.30- 15.15 Second Working Session

Challenges and Opportunities

- i - Reports on the TDC and Joint Council
- ii - Status of Implementation
- iii - Advancing Development Objectives

Place: Hotel Hyatt Regency Trinidad, #1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)

Room: Ball room

15.15 – 15.30 Coffee break

Place: Hotel Hyatt Regency Trinidad, #1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)

15.30- 17.00 Continuation of Second Working Session

- Recommendations to the Joint Council and the Trade and Development Committee
- Consideration of Draft Joint Declaration
- Presentations by:
 - Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA)
 - Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries (TTCSI)
 - Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce
 - Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Architects (TTIA)
 - Eurochamber

- Any other business

Place: Hotel Hyatt Regency Trinidad, #1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)

Room: Ball room

17.30 – 18.00 Joint Press conference

Place: Ball room

19.00 Stakeholder Engagement with Dinner

Place: Hotel Hyatt Regency Trinidad, #1 Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago)

Thursday, 4 April 2013

8.45 Departure of bus

9.00 - 11.00 Presentation and Tour at the University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus

Place: University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago (tbc)

11.00 - 13.30 Field Visit to Caroni, sugar dependant areas in Central Trinidad

14.00 - 15.30 Visit to Angostura Limited

16.00 - 18.00 EP delegation only: Briefing of MEPs with EU MS HoMs

18.00 - 19.30 Cocktail at the EP delegation

Friday, 5 April 2013

Departure of Members

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Bureau
David Martin (S&D, Chair) Vasant BHARATH, (Chair- Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment, Minister in the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, Trinidad and Tobago) Niccolò RINALDI (ALDE),(Vice-Chair) Afif Nazario RIZEK CAMILO (Deputy Speaker, Dominican republic)
Members
<u>European Parliament</u> Santiago FISAS AYXELA (EPP) Niccolò RINALDI (ALDE) Patrice TIROLIEN (S&D) Enrique GUERRERO SALOM (S&D)
<u>CARIFORUM</u> Douglas SLATER (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs, St. Vincent and the Grenadines) Fitz JACKSON (Member of Parliament-South St. Catherine, Jamaica) Joanne MASSIAH, (Minister of State/Legal Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda) Mara THOMPSON (Member of Parliament, Barbados) Nela KHAN (Deputy Speaker of the House, Trinidad and Tobago) Oliver JOSEPH, (Minister of Economic Development, Trade, Planning and Cooperatives, Grenada) Picewell A. Forbes, (High Commissioner, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Member of Parliament, The Bahamas)
Substitutes
<u>European Parliament</u> George Sabin CUTAŞ (S&D)
Commission
Daniella TRAMACERE (EU Delegation - Trinidad and Tobago) Joachim JAKOBSEN (EU Delegation- Guyana) Kathrin RENNEN (EU Delegation- Trinidad and Tobago),

Other participants

Alexis DOWNES-AMSTERDAM (CARIFORUM Directorate, CARICOM Secretariat), Brenda KING (ACP-European Union Group), Carlos WHARTON (Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA)), Carol BICKRAM (Trinidad and Tobago), Christopher MC NAIR (Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA)), Crystal AUSTIN (Liaison), , Edwina LEACOCK (Trinidad and Tobago), Fiona GRANT (British High Commission), Frances SEIGNORET (Trinidad and Tobago), Gary TURTON (Presenter), Inga DOTTIN-WILTSHIRE (Liaison), Iván OGANDO LORA (Director General- CARIFORUM Directorate, CARICOM Secretariat), Irfan HOSEIN (Liaison), Jacqueline CHARLES (Trinidad and Tobago), Jacques STURM, (Ambassador, French Republic), Kateri JOHNSTON (Trinidad and Tobago), Leslie HARMOLEGOS (Ministry of Trade, Dominican Republic), Liana SUKHBIR (Liaison), Lisa CROPPER-CUDJOE (Liaison), Marie Louse NORTON-MURRAY (Presenter), Nand BARDOUILLE (CARIFORUM Directorate, CARICOM Secretariat), Navida, RAMPERSAD, Niki BRAITHWAITE (Liaison), Nirad TEWARIE (Presenter), Norris HERBERT (Trinidad and Tobago), Pamela Coke-Hamilton (Executive Director, Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA)), Renee PENCO (Presenter), Ria RULLOW-BOWYER (Liaison), Rita KAUFMAN (Financial Trade Officer, The Bahamas), Roshelle HENRY (Jamaica High Commission), Sandra INDAR (Trinidad and Tobago), Satted KLOUS (German Embassy), Sean HILLS (Trinidad and Tobago), Shola BISHOP (CARIFORUM Directorate, CARICOM Secretariat), Simi SEURAJ (Liaison), Sonja FRANCIS (CARIFORUM Directorate, CARICOM Secretariat), Sonja TYSON (Trinidad and Tobago), Susan CURTIS (British High Commission), Susan SINGH-SEERATTAN (Trinidad and Tobago), Trudy LEWIS (Trinidad and Tobago), Wayne PUNNETTE (Trinidad and Tobago), Welate-Kristos MILLER (Liaison), Yolande AGARD-SIMMONS (Trinidad and Tobago)

Secretariats of political groups

PPE	Christopher WILLIAMS, Ursa. PONDELEK
S&D	
ALDE	
ECR	
Verts/ALE	
GUE/NGL	
EFD	
NI	

Committee secretariats

Helena HALLDORF ROMERO, Lenka DUBARRE