



**2023/0464M(NLE)**

28.11.2023

# OPINION

of the Committee on International Trade

for the Committee on Development

containing a motion for a non-legislative resolution on the conclusion of the Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific (OACPS) States, of the other part  
(2023/0464M(NLE))

Rapporteur for opinion: Samira Rafaela

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the conclusion of the negotiations of the new Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the overarching objectives it lays out on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and adhering to the Paris Agreement; insists that Parliament should have given its consent prior to a Council decision on the provisional application of the Post-Cotonou Agreement; underlines the important political, economic and cultural relationship between the EU and the OACPS; stresses that the EU contributes to sustainable economic development in the OACPS countries and to the advancement of their position within the global trading system; underlines that the Post-Cotonou Agreement will not change trading arrangements between the EU and the OACPS countries, whose partnership will continue to be based on separate trade agreements and instruments, notably the regional economic partnership agreements (EPAs) and the generalised system of preferences scheme (GSP); calls on the Commission to ensure that all its trade instruments targeting OACPS countries such as EPAs, the GSP and Aid for Trade are mutually reinforcing and aligned with the policy coherence for development principle;
2. Welcomes the overall aim of the Post-Cotonou Agreement to support the integration of the OACPS countries into the global economy; highlights that the agreement contains a chapter on trade cooperation that reaffirms the commitment to implement and strengthen EPAs, and establishes common priorities and dispositions, non-exhaustively, on trade and sustainable development, trade facilitation, trade in services, the promotion of multilateralism and the elimination of non-tariff barriers; welcomes, in particular, references to social, environmental and labour standards, corporate social responsibility, responsible business conduct and respect for the right to regulate throughout the agreement;
3. Stresses that the key role of the EPAs between the EU and African countries should be promoting long-term, sustainable development, reducing poverty and boosting regional integration; acknowledges the diverging views on EPAs and calls on the Commission to address them by building trust and mutual understanding on the benefits and concerns of EPAs; is attentive to the possibility of the positive and negative effects that the new Partnership Agreement between the EU and the members of the OACPS might have on intra-African trade; insists that any negative effects on intra-African trade should be avoided and addressed in close cooperation with our African partners; calls on the Commission to uphold the political, financial, technical and policy assistance provided to OACPS countries according to their assessed needs, namely to its African partners for the smooth implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, in view of promoting intra-African trade; insists on the need to accompany any trade arrangements with OACPS countries with capacity-building and technical assistance to effectively support their implementation; reiterates its request for an in-depth analysis of the impact of EPAs on local economies, regional integration, economic diversification and the

SDGs before negotiating new EPAs;

4. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the EPAs between the EU and African countries benefit intra-African trade and the African population;
5. Reiterates its call on the Commission to implement measures such as a prohibition on the importation of products related to severe human rights violations, such as forced labour or the worst forms of child labour; stresses the importance of including the objective of combating forced labour and child labour in the trade and sustainable development chapters of EU trade agreements;
6. Insists that the agreement's trade and investment provisions must be tailored to benefit all parties in order to ensure an equitable partnership; underlines the need to strike the right balance of benefits between the EU and the OACPS countries, in line with the parties' rights and obligations under the Post-Cotonou Agreement; calls on the Commission to guarantee that both the EU and OACPS countries, citizens and industries benefit from trade relations; calls on the Commission to advance sustainable and inclusive development and growth; calls on the Commission to ensure that the agreement is a basis for strengthening economic relations between the parties in a mutually beneficial way, increasing the global market share of both EU and OACPS businesses and strengthening the role of local entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises; highlights that this should take into account their respective levels of development, allow them to protect their infant industries, support small-scale farming and meet EU and international sustainability standards for exporting their agricultural products; calls on the Commission to effectively address and concretely guarantee EU market access for OACPS producers in the revision process of EPAs; calls on the Commission to promote sustainable investments to advance digital and green infrastructure in the OACPS countries in line with its pledge in the Glasgow Climate Pact, while ensuring the responsible management of natural resources and raw materials;
7. Calls on the Commission to support all activities related to the development of science, technology, research, innovation and digital transformation, which significantly contribute to accelerating sustainable development, and to support the OACPS countries in their determined efforts towards this process; insists that the implementation of the trade-related provisions of the new OACPS-EU Partnership Agreement must leave no one behind, contribute to stimulating and increasing strategic investment, create jobs, strengthen the role of the private sector and enhance economic and trade cooperation;
8. Recalls the importance of supporting smallholder farmers and the development of local and regional products and markets, avoiding promoting an exclusively export-oriented model of agriculture and strengthening circular economies' structures, intra-regional trade and commercial cooperation, which could contribute to preventing further deforestation and land grabbing processes;
9. Welcomes the commitment of the parties in Article 83 of the agreement to 'undertake measures to tackle tax avoidance, tax evasion and other harmful tax practices'; calls on the EU to support OACPS countries in combating illicit financial flows and tax evasion committed by EU companies and multinationals to ensure taxes are paid where profits

and real economic value are generated in order to stop base erosion and profit-shifting;

10. Calls on the EU to review the restrictions on export taxes, the World Trade Organization-plus provisions and the provisions on the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights in the current EPAs and future trade and cooperation agreements with OACPS countries;
11. Stresses that sustainability provisions should be anchored in goals and commitments on which both parties have agreed; acknowledges that parties to the agreement may have differing interpretations of sustainability and is mindful of the parties' respective levels of development and policy priorities; calls for an assessment to be carried out on the differences in interpretation and application in the Post-Cotonou Agreement, which could improve understanding of common sustainability goals by all parties and could support the UN free prior and informed consent principle; calls for the systematic inclusion of enforceable trade and sustainable development chapters in all currently negotiated and future EPAs;
12. Recalls Parliament's commitment to the European Green Deal and welcomes trade initiatives that contribute to achieving its objectives, including but not limited to the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the legislative proposal on mandatory due diligence; insists that the Commission carefully monitor the impact of these initiatives on EU-OACPS trade and present accompanying measures to mitigate any short-term disruption; is convinced that in the long-term, these legislative initiatives will result in more resilient and sustainable global value chains, benefiting citizens and businesses in the EU and the OACPS;
13. Calls on the African and European authorities to fight illicit financial phenomena, capital flight, tax avoidance schemes and national income loss due to tariff reduction, which is tantamount to 12 times the annual figure for official development assistance;
14. Underlines the provisional agreement for dialogue between the EU and OACPS countries on matters related to fundamental rights and other essential elements; recognises the strong human rights component in the EPAs; recalls the juridical standing of the Post-Cotonou Agreement, including the suspension clauses in Article 101(8) in the event of violations of human rights clauses; stresses the importance of political dialogue and consultation procedures to ensure the effectiveness of these clauses and calls on the Commission to guarantee that the suspension clauses will be correctly applied in the event of violations of essential elements of the agreement, such as the provisions related to human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law; emphasises that the suspension of provisions should not harm the population, but should target those responsible for violations of these essential elements; underlines the importance of dialogue and structured and effective cooperation with civil society in implementing the agreement, including on trade issues, as this will provide transparency, accountability, good governance and democratic rule and will advance essential elements; welcomes the inclusion of the mechanism for consultation as a positive and distinctive feature of the agreement; further welcomes the strong parliamentary dimension of the agreement and commits to monitoring its implementation;

15. Strongly underlines the important link between trade, the eradication of poverty, the fight against inequalities and support for sustainable development, provided that adequate institutions are set up; invites the Commission to report to Parliament on how the trade and investment-related aspects of the agreement are contributing to the achievement of the SDGs; strongly stresses the importance of taking into account the SDGs in the EPAs revision process; underlines the role of women and young people in the economies and societies of the OACPS countries; recognises that the agreement's trade and investment provisions take appropriate steps to provide decent jobs for all and to socioeconomically empower marginalised groups; calls on the Commission to increase and to guarantee the participation of these groups in EU-OACPS trade and investment relations; emphasises that the empowerment of women and girls must be mainstreamed and urges the parties to take actions to achieve gender equality, most notably for intra-African trade, and as part of EU-OACPS trade and investment relations, in close cooperation with stakeholders; calls on the Commission to update its 2009 communication on fair and ethical trade;
16. Is concerned, in view of the shrinking space for civil society, that the parties have committed to increasing the effective participation of civil society only 'where appropriate'; calls on the EU to promote the establishment of institutional and operational structures and mechanisms to ensure the systematic participation of civil society through a transparent and open dialogue and consultation process with civil society representatives from the EU and OACPS countries;
17. Stresses that the mutual relationship between the EU and the OACPS should be based on common values and that economic relations must develop on a partnership basis; underlines that our common goal is to ensure stability and prosperity to guarantee sustainable economic and social growth;
18. Is of the opinion that the Post-Cotonou Agreement can contribute to the trade and investment policy objectives of the EU and OACPS countries and recommends that Parliament give its consent.

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS  
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The rapporteur has received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the opinion, until the adoption thereof in committee:

<b>Entity and/or person</b>
Dr. James Nyomakwa-Obimpeh (PhD)
Professor Robert Dussey, Togo's Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Togolese Abroad, the OACPS' Chief Negotiator and Chair of the Ministerial Central Negotiating Group
CONCORD Europe

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	28.11.2023
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ : 30 - : 4 0 : 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Barry Andrews, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Tiziana Beghin, Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Daniel Caspary, Paolo De Castro, Markéta Gregorová, Heidi Hautala, Danuta Maria Hübner, Karin Karlsbro, Martine Kemp, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Gabriel Mato, Sara Matthieu, Emmanuel Maurel, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó, Samira Rafaela, Catharina Rinzema, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Helmut Scholz, Joachim Schuster, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Jan Zahradil, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Michiel Hoogeveen, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Ralf Seekatz



## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

30	+
NI	Tiziana Beghin, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó
PPE	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Daniel Caspary, Danuta Maria Hübner, Martine Kemp, Gabriel Mato, Ralf Seekatz, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Renew	Barry Andrews, Karin Karlsbro, Samira Rafaela, Catharina Rinzema, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne
S&D	Paolo De Castro, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Joachim Schuster, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt
The Left	Helmut Scholz
Verts/ALE	Saskia Bricmont, Markéta Gregorová, Heidi Hautala, Sara Matthieu

4	-
ECR	Geert Bourgeois, Michiel Hoogeveen, Jan Zahradil
The Left	Emmanuel Maurel

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention