

MINUTES

Subject: Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council,
held on 17 November 2017 in Brussels, Belgium

The Fourth Meeting of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council (referred to hereafter as 'the Joint Council') took place in Brussels, Belgium, on 17 November 2017.

The Joint Council was chaired on behalf of the European Union jointly by Mr Sven MIKSER, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, who represented the Council of the EU, and by Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM, European Commissioner for Trade.

Ms Kamina JOHNSON SMITH, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, served as CARIFORUM High Representative.

1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Co-Chairs welcomed the participants to the Meeting. The list of participants is set out in Annex 1 to these Minutes.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Joint Council adopted the agenda as set out in document CARIFORUM-UE 3651/1/17 REV 1, as set out in Annex 2 to these Minutes.

3. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The Joint Council agreed on the procedures for conducting its business.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT BY THE CARIFORUM-EU TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Joint Council took note of the oral progress report by the EU on the Seventh Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee (TDC), held on 15 November 2017 in Brussels, Belgium. The progress report is set out in Annex 3A to these Minutes. The essence of the reaction by the CARIFORUM High Representative is set out in Annex 3B to these Minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CARRIFORUM-EU TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

5.1. Monitoring mechanism for the EPA

The European Union pointed out the importance of setting up a monitoring mechanism so as to ensure that the objectives of the Agreement are realised. The EU stressed that both Parties should continue working towards that aim and arrive at a proposal as soon as possible. The EU recalled in this regard the document that it had shared at the Sixth Meeting of the Trade and Development Committee in 2016 containing indicators related to several areas. It thanked the CARIFORUM side for its preliminary comments and expressed its hope to receive detailed feed-back concerning the proposed indicators. The EU moreover expressed its readiness to provide technical assistance through the 11th EDF Regional Indicative Programme should it be required and committed to report on any progress on its side.

CARIFORUM informed that in 2015 it had received a proposal for developing such a mechanism through technical assistance from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). CARIFORUM States had however considered it to be too complex and would consequently be burdensome to implement. CARIFORUM advised that it would support a mechanism monitoring national, sub-regional and regional activities alike, an effective, user-friendly and cost-effective mechanism, which avoids duplication of efforts, which puts an emphasis not only on the Agreement's implementation but also on its impact and which feeds in the TDC annual review and the five-year review. CARIFORUM stated that the following underlying principles should be taken into account in devising a Monitoring system:

- the existing or planned mechanisms at the national, sub-regional and regional levels;
- the need for an effective and user friendly tool that could facilitate the generation of monitoring reports at the national and regional levels in a sustainable manner;
- the costs associated with monitoring at the various levels and the scarce human and financial resources on the Parties need to be considered;
- the need to avoid duplication of efforts;

- emphasis should not only be placed on the implementation of the Agreement by the Parties, but also the operation of the Agreement as envisaged by Article 5;
- the overall annual review of the EPA by the Trade and Development Committee as well as the five yearly review by the Joint Council; and
- the extent to which the results of the development cooperation objectives are being realized.

CARIFORUM informed that a regional workshop would take place in Barbados at the end of November to discuss the mechanism.

Both Parties agreed that developing a monitoring system for the EPA was a high priority. The two sides agreed the basic principles of such a mechanism should be established well before the next 5-year review.

5.2. Market access and Market Presence Impediments

CARIFORUM emphasised the key importance of the Services Title of the EPA, and in particular the Mode 4 Chapter dealing with the movement of natural persons for business purposes, but noted that, unfortunately, the services provisions have not yet yielded the expected benefits from the Agreement. CARIFORUM shared its concerns that the onerous visa requirements faced by some CARIFORUM nationals were a major impediment to achieving the level of market access contemplated by the Agreement. In addition it was noted that only nine CARIFORUM States fell under the Schengen visa waiver regime, while most CARIFORUM countries allowed visa-free entry to citizens of most EU Member States. CARIFORUM also indicated that the EU's complex domestic regulations and the lack of information and transparency are impediments to the development of the services sector. CARIFORUM recalled that, at its Third Meeting, the Joint Council mandated the exchange of information on the regulatory regimes in CARIFORUM and the EU to facilitate the temporary movement of natural persons for business purposes under the EPA. CARIFORUM reported that it had shared some information with the EU and looked forward to receiving information on the licensing requirements and procedures, qualification requirements and the technical standards applicable to the priority sectors identified by CARIFORUM.

The European Union took note of the expressed concerns, but noted that neither the GATS, nor the EPA, or any other EU trade agreement included specific entry or stay provisions. The EU further noted that requiring visas only from some nationals was usual and existed both at EU and CARIFORUM States level, and was determined by a wide range of factors, trade relations being only one of them. CARIFORUM however reminded that the EPA treats with temporary entry and its concerns were in the context of its services providers not being able to take advantage of the temporary entry provisions in the EPA.

The EU provided an update on the activities undertaken by the EU and its Member States to facilitate the entry of foreigners supplying services, as well as to provide transparency for easier identification by service suppliers of applicable legislation in a Member State of their interest, such as:

- the adoption of the Directive on intra-corporate transferees (managers, specialists and trainees), thereby creating a channel for admitting a sizeable part of Mode 4 service suppliers;
- looking into how to assess possible ways to provide even further legal certainty to other categories of service providers, including Contractual Service Suppliers and Independent Professionals;
- the launching of a review of the EU legal migration acquis in 2017 and presenting elements of the review to CARIFORUM in a dedicated videoconference in June 2017.

The EU had invited CARIFORUM to provide comments and to encourage its members and their service providers to contribute to the consultation between June and September 2017. The EU thanked the CARIFORUM for having provided an overview of applicable rules in selected CARIFORUM States, and informed that it intended to achieve similar transparency through a dedicated website, to complement other initiatives aimed at providing transparency on entry and visa requirements.

5.3. Proposal for a Special Committee for Trade in Services

Antigua and Barbados stressed that the services sector accounts for 70% of CARIFORUM economies, but faces challenges accessing the EU market, as reported by the five-year review of the EPA. Therefore, it urged for the establishment of a Special Committee for Trade in Services under Article 230 (4) of the EPA and noted that the recent establishment of the Agriculture and Fisheries Committee created precedent for this.

Other CARIFORUM States supported this proposal, recalling that the June 2017 videoconference was insufficient to facilitate adequate discussions on services trade. CARIFORUM contended that a Special Committee for Trade in Services should, for example, disseminate information on the services regulation of each counterpart, particularly regarding visa, nationality and residence requirements. It should also facilitate improved statistical reporting and work on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.

The EU pointed out that the EPA should not be overburdened with bureaucratic institutions, but agreed to establishing a Special Committee on Trade in Services and to start preparations for setting up such a Committee.

5.4. Application of the Octroi de Mer in the French Caribbean Outermost Regions

CARIFORUM reiterated its concern regarding the application of the "octroi de mer" by the French Caribbean Outermost Regions (FCORs), which was in its view discriminatory and illegal, and asked the European Union to ensure that the application of the "octroi de mer" against goods originating in CARIFORUM States would be terminated with immediate effect. CARIFORUM reiterated that the tax represented a major obstacle for their trade with the FCORs, inasmuch as, according to information provided to CARICOM by authorities in the FCORs, it was an internal tax and the rate applied on goods from CARIFORUM was higher than the rate applied on domestic production. CARIFORUM recalled that such a discriminatory application of internal taxes was illegal under the GATT (1994) and under the EPA, and added that the FCORs had increased the rates of "octroi de mer" applied to imports from CARIFORUM States in 2012.

The European Union noted that the dock dues were discussed on many occasions, and recalled that the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union allowed taking special measures for Outermost Regions considering their specific situation, and that the EPA grandfathered this measure, provided that it was limited to what was necessary and relied on objective justifications and was duly documented for each product. The European Union explained that for this reason the French authorities have to provide detailed data and analysis for each product before these exemptions or reductions were adopted. The EU furthermore expressed its support for also tackling the problem in direct dialogue with the FCORs. The EU noted that the current scheme was valid until December 2020. The EU indicated that the review of the current scheme was scheduled to take place before the end of 2017 and the decision was a matter for the EU Member States, not for the Commission. The EU advised that in this regard, the French authorities are to submit by 31 December 2017 a report indicating the impact of the schemes and their contribution to the development of local economic activities in the light of the handicaps affecting the outermost regions. The EU further advised that on the basis of that report, the EU Member States might decide to make a proposal for adapting the provisions of the decision. The EU recalled that, as discussed in 2016 at the TDC meeting, the CARIFORUM States were invited to transmit relevant information and analysis on the possible impact of the dock dues to the European Commission, which will transmit it to France, as this could help France to reassess the impact of the dock dues regime in the CARIFORUM countries.

CARIFORUM indicated that the information was submitted to the Commission which then indicated that the information should be in the form of a market study, including data concerning not only the list of goods affected, but also the nature of the market, the share of sales and their development, the impact on final price and any additional element needed to support the idea of a distortion introduced by the dock dues regime. CARIFORUM stated its objection to that approach as information of the discriminatory application of the tax was already presented. CARIFORUM further indicated that it was a matter of principle and not one which required it to prove anti-competitive practices.

The Joint Council was unable to resolve the matter but took note of the fact that CARIFORUM would like to maintain the item on the agenda of the Council.

5.5. Financing EPA implementation

CARIFORUM reiterated its view that development cooperation was crucial for the implementation of the EPA, but stressed that the study that it has performed, confirmed revenue loss and an increased trade deficit. CARIFORUM expressed its concern that this result was disproportionate and was outweighing the financial and technical support provided by the EU. Moreover, the EPA being a trade and development tool, CARIFORUM should not bear the net costs from the scope of the liberalization commitment. Substantial additional funding, in addition to the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) for the European Development Fund (EDF) was needed in order to overcome the ‘capacity constraints’ of the CARIFORUM States, inter alia in the area of infrastructure, and to allow them to fully benefit from the agreement; the RIP was only one possible source of funding for EPA implementation.

The European Union confirmed that development cooperation was an important and integral part of the EPA and noted that since the signature of the Agreement in 2008, the EU has provided almost EUR 2 billion to the region under the 10th and 11th EDFs. The EU provided an update on the state of the implementation of the 10th and 11th EDF, noting that the 10th EDF Caribbean Regional Indicative Programme (CRIP) from which the financing for the implementation of the EPA originated, had a total allocation of EUR 160 million, of which EUR 136 million were earmarked for regional economic integration and EPA implementation. In addition, there were EUR 102 million under the 11th EDF, out of the EUR 346 million total Programme allocation. Under the 10th EDF EPA support programme, a budget of EUR 46.5 million was earmarked for supporting CARIFORUM countries in better integrating into the world economy and reaping the full benefits of the EPA. In addition, a programme of EUR 28 million was implemented in the field of private sector development. The EU informed that most of the programmes had been completed and important achievements were made possible, which should translate into concrete benefits for economic operators and citizens in the Caribbean.

While identification of new programmes under the 11th EDF was underway some new programmes had already been adopted in 2016, namely the private sector development programme implemented by Caribbean Export Development Agency (EUR 24 million) and a new programme to support CARIFORUM in the implementation of the EPA for further EUR 6.2 million. Moreover, EUR 30 million had been committed for the Caribbean Investment Facility, which was an important tool for leveraging additional investments from the private sector and international financing institutions. Blending instruments could be extremely relevant for supporting investments in key sectors with a direct bearing on EPA implementation such as transport infrastructure (ports/airports), interconnectivity, sustainable energy, ICT, access to credit for SMEs, etc. Finally, a new EPA implementation proposal was under discussion by the Parties and new forms and themes for cooperation were being explored. The EU also indicated that it is important to promote more cooperation between EU specialised agencies and the region for exchanges of peer-to-peer expertise and capacity building, and recommended that the CARIFORUM Directorate should work with regional counterparts and the EU Delegation in Barbados in order to expedite the design of the new EPA programme and avoid any gaps that can hinder implementation.

The Joint Council agreed to follow up on the financing of EPA implementation.

6. WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM FROM THE EU

CARIFORUM noted that it was important to be regularly informed of the process as it could possibly affect the countries in the region. It also informed that it has already held discussions with the United Kingdom about their future bilateral relations once the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU was confirmed. It stressed that the UK is, apart from historical ties, an important partner for CARIFORUM as it represents 25% of CARIFORUM exports to the EU. CARIFORUM requested regular updates on the withdrawal process beyond information available in the media.

The European Union acknowledged this issue may possibly affect the countries of the Caribbean, who were concerned not only for historical reasons, but also because of geographical proximity, as well as political and economic ties to both the EU and the United Kingdom. The EU invited the CARIFORUM to deliver their comments, and share their possible concerns, but noted that given the ongoing negotiations, it was not in a position to elaborate further.

The two Sides agreed to keep each other informed of further developments.

7. ACP-EU RELATIONS POST-COTONOU

The European Union informed of the process of ongoing internal discussions on its side on the future of its relations with the ACP countries, noting that this has already been discussed during the last Joint ACP-EU Ministerial Trade Committee meeting on 20 October 2017. EU Development Ministers have already had three important discussions on the basis of the Joint Communication for a renewed partnership with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, building on the UN 2030 Agenda and on the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy. The draft proposal foresees a substantially revised umbrella agreement at ACP level in combination with three regional pillars. The EU furthermore outlined the set of specific objectives as regards the Caribbean, identified in the Joint Communication: (a) international peace and human security; democracy; the rule of law, good governance and human rights; (b) regional integration, inclusive and sustainable growth, trade and job creation; (c) human development; (d) climate change and sustainable management of natural resources. It also identified the strategic geographical location of the Caribbean in terms of maritime transportation, illegal traffics, migration, etc., that make the Caribbean a natural partner for the EU. The EU further informed about the ongoing discussions in the Council of the EU on the priorities, objectives and setup of the future relationship with the ACP, which will fill into the recommendation for a EU negotiation mandate that will be the basis for agreeing the EU position in preparation for the negotiations with the ACP, to start by 1 September 2018.

In parallel, there was an EU outreach effort to the ACP partner countries in order to discuss the approach and work towards converging views on future relations. The EU noted the convergence in both Parties' views that the adaptation of the relationship needed to better respond to the new global reality and be brought in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The EU underscored that it strives for a comprehensive development framework, embedding its development policy into the wider framework of its external action, notably the EU Global Strategy. Referring to the 2016 Commission Communication outlining the broad orientations for the future of this partnership after 2020, the EU confirmed that in the area of trade there was a need for continuity and certainty, and not for radical changes. It stressed the trade and development nature of the partnership, and pointed out that development cooperation would continue to play a key role in trade relations and the EU would continue to respect its commitments under the EPAs. The EU further reiterated that even if development cooperation were to go on in one form or another, and the instruments changed, there would still be cooperation. The Commission would soon propose negotiating directives; the negotiations with the ACP side should start next year, probably in summer. The European Union requested the Caribbean views, expectations, and intentions on how the respective Governments planned to organise for the upcoming negotiations.

CARIFORUM informed that they were in favour of an EU-ACP wide relationship under a legally binding agreement that was better adapted to current challenges, taking into account regional issues and vulnerabilities (such as climate change, disaster proneness, capacity, economic growth, security and the fact that Haiti was the only LDC in the region). The importance of graduation and differentiation; sustainable development and economic growth, innovation and technology transfer, peace, democracy and good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms were also highlighted. CARIFORUM informed of its intention to organise a ministerial meeting to adopt its negotiating position soon.

The Joint Council took note of the information.

8. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS

8.1. Decision establishing the List of Arbitrators under Article 221 (1)

The Joint Council adopted the Decision (see Annex 4).

8.2 Decision amending Annex IX to Protocol I - Change in the status of EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories

The Joint Council adopted the Decision (see Annex 5).

9. Approval of final communique

The Joint Council issued a Joint Communiqué on the Meeting (see Annex 6).

10. Any other business

There were no issues raised under this item.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CARIFORUM STATES

<u>CARIFORUM HIGH REPRESENTATIVE</u>	H.E. Ms Kamina JOHNSON SMITH, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	H.E. Mr Everly Paul Chet GREENE, Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce
BAHAMAS	Ms Keva BAIN, Acting Director and Legal Advisor, Ministry of Financial Services Ms Sandaria HALL, Project Manager, Ministry of Financial Services
BARBADOS	Mr Bentley GIBBS, Permanent Mission of Barbados to the United Nations and other International Organisations at Geneva Ms Shennel RICHARDS, Senior Economist, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Mr Nicholas COX, First Secretary, Embassy of Barbados, Belgium
BELIZE	Mr Richard REID, Senior Trade Economist, Directorate General for Foreign Trade Mr Dylan VERNON, Ambassador, Embassy of Belize, Belgium Mr Raineldo URBINA, First Secretary, Embassy of Belize, Belgium
DOMINICA	H.E. Mr Ian Charles DOUGLAS, Minister of Trade, Energy and Employment Ms Yvanette BARON-GEORGE, EPA Coordinator, Ministry of Trade, Energy and Employment
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	H.E. Mr Nelson TOCA, Minister of Industry and Commerce Ms Yahaira SOSA, Vice Minister of Commerce Ms Hepzy ZORILLA, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Commerce Ms Angela VIGLIOTTA, Embassy of the Republic of the Dominican Republic, Belgium

GRENADA	Ms C.J. AUGUSTINE-KANU, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative to the European Union
GUYANA	Mr David T. A. HALES, Ambassador, Embassy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Belgium Ms Bevon McDONALD, Sen. Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ms Cindy SAUERS, First Secretary, Embassy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana Belgium
HAITI	H.E. Mr Antonio RODRIGUE, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Jean Claude BARTHELEMY, Director of Economic Relations and Cooperation, Ministry of Trade and Industry Mr Georges Philippe DUROSEAU, First Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Haiti, Belgium Mr Jean Jacques CHARLES, National Authorising Officer,
JAMAICA	H.E. Ms Kamina JOHNSON SMITH, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Ms Vilma McNISH, Ambassador Embassy of Jamaica, Belgium Ms Symone BETTON-NAYO, Head, Trade Agreements Implementation and Coordination Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
ST KITTS AND NEVIS	Ms Jasemin WEEKES, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of International Trade, Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs
ST LUCIA	Mr Guy MAYERS, High Commissioner to London and Permanent Representative at the WTO Ms Lisa PHILIP, EPA Coordinator, Department of Commerce, International Trade, Investment, Enterprise Development and Cooperation
ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	Ms Sharlene SHILLINGFORD-McKLMON, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium
SURINAME	Ms Jo-Ann BUYNE, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Suriname to Belgium Ms Patricien BISOEN, Senior Trade Official, Ministry of Trade and Industry

**TRINIDAD AND
TOBAGO**

**Mr Colin CONNELLY, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago to Belgium**
**Ms Joanne BROOKS, Second Secretary, Embassy of the Republic
of Trinidad and Tobago to Belgium**
**Ms Claire DE BOURG, Second Secretary, Embassy of the Republic
of Trinidad and Tobago to Belgium**

**CARICOM
SECRETARIAT**

Mr Percival MARIE, Director General, CARIFORUM
**Ms Alexis DOWNES-AMSTERDAM, Director, EPA
Implementation Unit**
**Mr John SPENCE, Senior Coordinator, Intellectual Property
Science & Technology, Office of Trade Negotiation**
Mr Russell KING, Trade in Service and Investment Specialist
Mr Sean TAYLOR, Trade in Goods Specialist,
**Mr Anthony SEVERIN, Head of International Relations, OECS
Commission**
**Mr Escipion OLIVEIRA GOMES, Deputy Executive Director of
the Caribbean Export Development Agency**
Ms Shola BISHOP, Administrative Officer

EUROPEAN UNION

<u>EU CO-CHAIRS</u>	H.E. Mr Sven MIKSER, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia H.E. Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM, Commissioner for Trade in the European Commission
BULGARIA	Mr Rumen KAMENOV, Minister Plenipotentiary Mr Bozhidar PATINOV
CZECH REPUBLIC	Ms Blanka SOUSKOVA, First Secretary Mr Filip NGUYEN
GERMANY	Ms Kerstin SCHUMACHER, Legal Advisor
ESTONIA	Mr Sven MIKSER, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms Moonika KASE, Adviser to the Minister Ms Elo MADISTE, Counsellor Ms Siiri KÖNIGSBERG, Chair of the ACP Working Party Ms Mirjam SUTROP, ACP WP Deputy Chaire Mr Karl Oskar VILLSAAR, Assistant
GREECE	Ms Christina Eirini MAVROMATI, ACP delegate
CROATIA	Ms Eva PLETIKOS, COLAC delegate Ms Biljana ŽILIC
SPAIN	Mr José Antonio ZAMORA RODRIGUEZ, Counsellor
FRANCE	Ms Valentine DELCOUSTAL, Counsellor Ms Laetitia CHICA
ITALY	Ms Ana Cecilia BONILLA TAVIANI, Development Cooperation Coordinator Mr Calogero CAPUTO
CYPRUS	Mr Nicholas EMILIOU, Ambassador/Permanent Representative Mr Stavros VASSILIOU Mr Xenios XENOPHONTOS

LATVIA	Ms Sintija RUPJĀ, Third Secretary Ms Inese BALODE
LUXEMBOURG	Mr Claude JAMIL, Coordinator Development Policy
NETHERLANDS	Ms Elisabeth KONING, ACP delegate Mr Timo VERHEIJ
PORTUGAL	Ms Paula LOPES ROCHA, Counsellor
ROMANIA	Ms Daniela GRIGORE GÎTMAN, Director General MFA Ms Oana CĂMĂȘOIU
SLOVENIA	Ms Ana NOVAK, COAFR/COLAC Delegate Ms Helena VODUŠEK
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SWEDEN	Ms Hannah WIDSTAM, Counsellor
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EEAS

Mr Fernando PONZ, Deputy Head of Division
Ms Gosia LACHUT
Mr Mikko KEINÄNEN

COUNCIL

Ms Alda SILVEIRA REIS, Director for Trade, Development
(including EU-ACP Relations), Horizontal Issues, Foreign Affairs
Council Support
Ms Kristina HORVATH, Policy Administrator
Ms Tsvetelina ILIEVA, Policy Administrator

**CARIFORUM-EU
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENT**

Brussels, 13 November 2017

**CARIFORUM-UE 3651/1/17
REV 1**

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

for: Fourth meeting of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council
on: 17 November 2017 (10:00)
at: Justus Lipsius Building, 175, rue de la Loi, 1048 Brussels

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Procedural matters
4. Implementation progress report by the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee
5. Matters arising from the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee
 - 5.1 Monitoring Mechanism for the EPA
 - 5.2 Market access and Market Presence Impediments
 - 5.3 Proposal for a Special Committee for Trade in Services
 - 5.4 Application of the Octroi de Mer in the French Caribbean Outermost Regions
 - 5.5 Financing EPA Implementation

6. Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU
 7. ACP-EU relations Post-Cotonou
 8. Adoption of decisions
 - 8.1 Decision Establishing the List of Arbitrators under Article 221(1)
 - 8.2 Decision Amending Annex IX to Protocol I - Change in the status of EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories
 9. Approval of final communique
 10. Any Other Business
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**FOURTH MEETING OF THE JOINT
CARIFORUM-EU COUNCIL**

Brussels, Belgium

17 November 2017

8 November 2017

**IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT BY THE CARIFORUM-EU TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The Seventh Meeting of the Trade and Development Committee under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) took place in Brussels, on 15 November 2017. The Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Ms Diana Acconcia, Head of the Economic Partnership Agreements – Africa, Caribbean and Pacific, Overseas Countries and Territories Unit in DG Trade.

Institutional Performance

The Institutional Performance of the CARIFORUM – EU EPA since our last Joint Council meeting in Guyana in 2015 has been positive:

1) The Third meeting of the CARIFORUM – EU **Parliamentary Committee** was held on October 31st and November 1st in Trinidad and Tobago. The meeting served as an occasion for the two Sides to affirm their resolve to renew, strengthen and mainstream the engagement of Parliamentary representatives in the operation of the EPA. Both Delegations underscored their shared commitment to work together to provide fresh impetus and to make sure that the Agreement will deliver concrete results concerning sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction in CARIFORUM States. At the occasion of the meeting, a debate ‘How to make EPA work’ took also place where the representatives of the Caribbean and European private sector and the regional export promotion organization shared their views on pushing for an increased utilization of our Agreement by economic operators on both sides.

2) The Third meeting of the **Consultative Committee** was also held from 6th-7th November in Trinidad and Tobago, which shows the involvement of the civil society in the implementation of the EPA. We are pleased to inform that the list of European members of the Consultative Committee was renewed and the members have now a new mandate to continue working. Civil society has a very important contribution to make to the implementation of this agreement, and we are looking forward to have close dialogue with them on relevant issues. In this regard, the Committee highlighted and emphasised issues related to trade in services, entrepreneurship, access to finance, climate change and social aspects.

3) The Fourth meeting of the **Special Committee on Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation** was held on 7th July. This Committee adopted a relevant decision, granted in favour of the Dominican Republic, concerning a derogation from the rules of origin with regard to certain textile products.

4) **Arbitrators**: The EU legal procedures for the list of arbitrators have been finalized and we are pleased that the Decision of Arbitrators under Article 221 (1) will be signed and adopted at this meeting.

5) **Change in the status of EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)**: The EU legal procedures for the list of arbitrators have also been finalized and we are pleased that the Decision of Arbitrators under Article 221 (1) will be signed and adopted at this meeting.

6) In the framework of the **WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements (CRTA)**, the WTO Secretariat prepared in May 2017 a first draft of the Factual Presentation of the EU-CARIFORUM EPA. The Factual Presentation will be on the agenda of the first available CRTA meeting, most likely in the first quarter of 2018.

Agriculture and Fisheries

Following the discussions and exchanges that took place during the fifth and the sixth meetings of the Trade and Development Committee, the Decision establishing a **Special Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries** was officially adopted. The inaugurating meeting of the Committee took place 26 October 2017 in Santo Domingo. This Special Committee will play a significant role in effective implementation of the agriculture and fisheries provisions to CARIFORUM's food and nutrition security and sustainable development.

The meeting had a substantive agenda covering: Agriculture development (enhancing rural development and agribusiness through increased investment, value added production and technology development), Sugar (Abolition of EU sugar production quotas and new EU regulations governing sugar post abolition, Sugar Accompanying Measures and Cumulation for Sugar containing Products), Cadmium in cocoa issue, Fisheries (Sustainability and resource management, Value added/value chain approach to fisheries, Strengthening data and information Systems, Strengthening aquaculture and Research and Development), Sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), Technical barriers to trade, Climate change and Disaster Risk Management, Operation of contact points or competent authorities and the Octroi de Mer.

Geographical Indications

At the occasion of the first Special Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, a dedicated **CARIFORUM – EU Meeting on the Protection of Geographical Indications** also took place on 24th October in Santo Domingo. During this meeting, the Parties held the final stage of the technical talks for the CARIFORUM-EU Geographical Indication's Agreement. As a result, the text and the GI specifications have achieved progress. It was agreed to jointly report positively to JC and TDC and continue the work between the European Commission and the CF Secretariat in order to finalize the drafting of the agreement before March 2018. The Agreement on GI's will allow CARIFORUM States to take full advantage of the culture and tradition rooted in their products. Their products, with a culturally, distinctive background will be able to create value for local communities and support local production and development since Geographical Indications are becoming a beneficial intellectual property right, particularly for developing countries.

Intellectual Property

In the context of the Intellectual Property is also necessary to mention a regional forum, entitled **CARIFORUM-EU Workshop on Intellectual Property (IP) Tools, Networks and Cooperation** organized jointly by CARIFORUM and the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), in partnership with the Delegation of the European Union in September 2016. The discussions and the brainstorming session held during this meeting allowed for identification of a number of potential cooperation opportunities with EUIPO in an effort to advance implementation of the intellectual property provisions of the EPA. The areas for potential cooperation were set out in a paper presented during the 6th TDC meeting. During the 2017 TDC meeting the EU restated its support and willingness to assist the CARIFORUM Directorate to explore technical cooperation with other EU agencies, also in fields other than IPRs.

Cooperation and Development

Since the signature of the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement in 2008, the core of the financing for the implementation of the EPA originated from the 10th EDF Caribbean Regional Indicative Programme (CRIP). The main sector of concentration under the 10th EDF was economic regional integration including EPA implementation, with an allocation of €140 million (85% of the total CRIP). In particular, inside the CRIP the EPA support programme was earmarked a budget of €46,5 million to supporting CARIFORUM countries in better integrating into the world economy and reaping the full benefits of the EPA; the programme pivoted on 7 components varying from statistics, fiscal reform, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, the services sector, support to the rum sector and support to the EPA unit.

Overall, the implementation of the described programmes under the 10th EDF CRIP was characterized by a slow start, but execution has gradually recovered. At the end of the period the situation has been the following. At the end of the implementation period, 99% of the allocations have been contracted, 83% paid and 81% actually utilized by the implementing institutions. These cooperation programmes led to positive achievements. The region made progress towards a modern quality infrastructure according to internationally recognized principles. Progress included the development and operationalization of regional frameworks for standardization, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation. Important steps towards harmonization of standards and procedures have also been made and country capacity of national Bureau of standards have been expanded and strengthened. Laboratories have been established in various countries and were supported and accreditation assessments were conducted throughout the region. Progress was made also on the regulatory side namely on SPS. Model Bills were developed in all key areas of plant health, animal health, food safety and fisheries. Fourteen Protocols were developed while capacity building was provided with over 2,000 regulatory personnel trained. Numerous private sector entities received direct technical assistance in Food Safety Management and Traceability and manuals and bulletins were completed for improving capacities of public and private sector stakeholders.

A specific action supporting the Agriculture sector was also funded under the Intra-ACP Programmes providing support to dozens of small and medium operators, while the coconut sector received specific support under a programme that will be continued and scaled up in the coming years. Also the rum sector received support materialising in the introduction of the "Authentic Caribbean Rum Marque" as well as numerous promotion events, market researches and hundreds of operators trained.

Through the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC) the region has been receiving demand-driven Technical Assistance (TA) in core areas of economic and financial management. Public Finance Management (PFM) support is moving countries closer to core PFM standards, strengthening budget preparation and execution, modernizing legal frameworks, and improving the management of fiscal risks. CARTAC has played a crucial role in supporting tax reform and improving tax administration, particularly the successful launch of VAT in eight countries with ongoing support to a ninth. Other areas of intervention have included financial sector supervision and regulation and quality and timeliness of economic statistics.

Looking forward, the total indicative allocation of the 11th EDF CRIP is €346 million which corresponds to a substantial increase in respect to the allocation of the 10th EDF (€165 million). Again, the largest allocation in the CRIP's sectors of intervention is earmarked to regional economic cooperation and integration (€102 million) processes in the Caribbean. These funds will also aim at enhancing international and intra-regional trade and investments and facilitating EPA implementation. Thus EPA implementation still represents the core business of EU-CARIFORUM cooperation.

For the time being, new programmes have been already adopted in 2016 under the 11th EDF, namely a new private sector development programme to be implemented by Caribbean Export Development Agency (24 M€) and a new programme to support CARIFORUM in the implementation of the EPA for further 6.2 M€. A new EPA implementation proposal is under discussion by the parties, new forms and themes for cooperation are being explored. As an example, the excellent interactions that several agencies in the region have had on the issue of Intellectual Property, also benefiting by inputs from the EU Intellectual Property Organisation (EUIPO), are being examined.

Monitoring

One of the most pertinent issues discussed during this year's TDC was the establishment of a **mechanism to monitor** the operations of the Agreement. Article 5 of the Agreement sets the basis for the monitoring exercise and the objective is to assure that the objectives of the Agreement are realized and that the Agreement is properly implemented and the benefits are maximized. The Parties agree about some requirements that the proposed system must possess (i.e. it should be transparent, flexible, reliable and sustainable), and both sides have expressed in the past the view that the monitoring mechanism should be a joint exercise and be validated perhaps through a joint report. However, both parties must elaborate a more precise document including specific indicators, as well as define a time-frame and the very next steps to be taken in elaboration and implementation of a fully-fledged and functioning EPA monitoring and evaluation system.

Services

Following recommendations of the 6th TDC meeting the Parties held via video-conference on 23 June this year, an **EU-CARIFORUM Meeting on Trade in Services under the EPA took place**. During that meeting both parties agreed to continue engaging in discussions aimed at enhancing the legal and technical capacities of the CARIFORUM States and the competitiveness of the CARIFORUM service suppliers in the tourism services sector. The discussions held during the seventh TDC meeting have led to further recommendations for closer cooperation and engagement, **particularly in tourism** and travel-related services. These initiatives should principally target small, medium and micro-enterprises, in particular by providing technical assistance and exchanging information and best practices and should also aim at enhancing the regulatory framework and development of appropriate standards. The Parties have also acknowledged the State of Play and the progress made in the process of reaching inter-regional Mutual Recognition Agreement for Architects. Finally, the both sides underscored the importance of continuous engagement on the Services provisions of the EPA and agreed to explore measures that support the development of the capacity of CARIFORUM service suppliers to gain meaningful access to the EU market and to address challenges associated with the collection of services trade data.

Cultural cooperation

In implementation of the EPA's Protocol on Cultural Cooperation, a Joint Meeting on Cultural Cooperation was held via video-conference on 28 July 2017. During the Meeting Parties discussed the challenges facing the cultural sector in CARIFORUM and in the EU, as well as the opportunities for collaboration in cultural sector with the emphasis on audio-visual, performing arts and publishing sectors. Parties discussed a number of programmes to support CARIFORUM practitioners, including specific EU programmes for Culture for ACP countries and UNESCO support actions.

The Parties have also agreed to work on possible revision of the modalities for cultural exchanges on the basis of a draft to be presented by CARIFORUM.

Both sides committed to continue the dialogue and undertake further actions aiming at speedy and full activation of the protocol on Cultural Cooperation.

Other EPA Implementation Issues and the status of ratification

The 7th TDC meeting received updates respectively on a number of **EPA Implementation Issues** including **the status of ratification of the EPA**. We regret that on both sides, not all countries have ratified the agreement and not sufficient progress has been achieved in 2017. The EU reported that 7 of its Member States had yet to ratify the Agreement – Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia. CARIFORUM reported that 9 CARIFORUM States had ratified the Agreement, the most recent being Grenada which ratified in October 2017. The CARIFORUM States that have not ratified the Agreement include – the Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Although all EU Member States and CARIFORUM States are provisionally applying the agreement (except Croatia and Haiti), ratification and entry into force would be an important signal to investors that countries are serious to take on long term commitments on trade policy.

There have, however, been **some challenges with EPA implementation and EPA awareness in general**. To respond to this challenge the EU has initiated a strategy to engage with the private sector through regional B2B events linked to EPA workshops and road shows in the EU with participation of the economic operators from selected CARIFORUM sectors. This strategy is being facilitated in collaboration with the Caribbean Export Development Agency (CEDA) and the CARIFORUM Directorate. The first such event was held on the occasion of the Trade and Investment Convention (TIC) hosted by the Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA) in July. On November 28th, we will, in collaboration with CEDA, the Government of St. Lucia and the OECS Secretariat, be organizing a similar in St. Lucia - even although on a much smaller scale -tailored to the OECS countries. Together with CEDA and CARIFORUM counterparts, we are working on an agenda for similar events next year.

We have seen a number of **particular success stories** across the CARIFORUM Region which suggests that although slow, the EPA has been making a significant impact on the economic operators in the CARIFORUM Region. CEDA has documented a number of companies that have benefitted from their assistance with support from the 10th EDF. These range from condiments from Jamaica (Southside Distributors Ltd.), beer from Barbados (10 Saints), to niche market products from Trinidad and Tobago (SMAKS). The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) through its implementation of the 10th EDF EPA Standby Facility has also documented successful EPA-related activities in several CARIFORUM countries including the creation of an Electronic Single Window in Suriname and a Packing Facility in Grenada.

Following the conclusion of the 7th Trade and Development Committee Meeting, we remain confident that despite persisting challenges and certain shortcomings in EPA implementation, the continuous efforts and execution of the Meeting's recommendation and conclusions will significantly contribute to the sustainable development of the CARIFORUM States. The achievement of the EPA objectives and further strengthening of the partnership between the two parties will also be realized.

**ITEM 4 – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT BY THE CARIFORUM-EU
TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (TDC)**

CARIFORUM's response to the presentation

Institutional Performance

- The breadth of issues covered in the Report is indicative of the efforts, on both Sides to make this Economic Partnership Agreement work. The institutional performance of the EPA has indeed been a positive one. All the joint institutions under the EPA have met this year and, as Chair of the joint institutions in 2017, the CARIFORUM Side is understandably proud. We pass the baton to the EU for 2018 and have no doubt that the course will be stayed.
- The Parliamentary Committee has made a number of important recommendations to this body and CARIFORUM hopes that the Meeting will consider them favourably. Special mention must also be made of the Technical Sub-Committee on Development Cooperation which met by videoconference, on 26 September 2017. CARIFORUM urges the holding of regular meetings of this important body. The Meeting on revealed that in the context of giving effect to the development cooperation provisions of the EPA and the continued full implementation of the Declaration on Development Cooperation, several cross-cutting focal areas require the attention, follow up and action of the two Sides.

Agriculture and Fisheries

- The Agriculture and Fisheries sector plays an important multi-functional role in the economies of many CARIFORUM States. For these CARIFORUM States, agriculture and fisheries are important both in terms of livelihood security and food security and we look forward to its important work.

- The successful establishment of the Special Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries further strengthens the argument for the establishment of a Special Committee on Services, a sector that accounts for a much more significant roughly 70% of the GDP of many CARIFORUM States, and CARIFORUM recalls that engagement on Services is a mandate from the Third Meeting of the Joint Council in 2015.

Geographical Indications and Cooperation in the area of Intellectual Property

- Geographical Indications are of great importance for CARIFORUM. The progress made as a result of the close technical cooperation between the CARIFORUM and the EU is welcome. The two Sides have agreed to a schedule which should ensure that the next time this body meets, the report will be not one of progress, but rather of the conclusion of the agreement.
- The emphasis the report places on CARIFORUM States being able “to take full advantage of the culture and tradition rooted in their products” is welcomed. We therefore trust that all GIs will be covered by the Agreement and that in the not too distant future, we can turn our attention to the protection of traditional knowledge and folklore.
- The CARIFORUM Side is pleased with the efforts made by both Sides to explore cooperation opportunities in the broad area of Intellectual Property (IP) and looks forward to collaborating with EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and other agencies as we collectively seek to implement the IP these provisions of the EPA.

Cooperation and Development

- The CARIFORUM Side registers its appreciation for the support which the EU has provided for EPA implementation under the 10th EDF CRIP, as well as 11th EDF CRIP. The systemic challenges/binding constraints which CARIFORUM States face in taking advantage of the market access offered by the Agreement and meeting the financing needs thereto are such that aid additionality, transcending EDF resources, is required. This additional support can be in the form of grant resources, soft and innovative financing and technical assistance. This will allow us to defray the costs necessary to fully benefit from the opportunities offered by the EPA, to meet the necessary adjustment costs and to implement its obligations under the EPA.

- Mention was made of the preparation of model Bills in the areas of plant and health, food safety and fisheries. That attention to the legal and regulatory framework of CARIFORUM States cannot be over emphasised. Regulatory and policy changes have to be made by CARIFORUM States to give effect to various provisions of the Agreement.

Services

- CARIFORUM reiterates the importance of trade in services and of dialogue aimed at enhancing the legal and technical capacities of its States as well as the competitiveness of CARIFORUM enterprises, especially small and medium enterprises. Again this Council in 2015 had underscored the importance of continuous engagement on the Services provisions of the EPA, bearing in mind the conclusion of the Five Year Review that the provisions had not yet yielded the anticipated benefits.
- The CARIFORUM Side is pleased at the recognition of the need for closer cooperation and engagement in services, in particular the tourism sector, having regard to its role as the primary economic driver and foreign exchange earner for many CARIFORUM economies. On issues such as the impediments to market access and market presence, which will be addressed under Agenda item 5, the need to ensure that regional services suppliers are not denied entry to the EU market on account of the visa policy and other impediments cannot be over emphasized.

Cultural cooperation

- More attention needs to be paid by both Parties to the area of cultural cooperation and the resources required for promoting this aspect of the Partnership. CARIFORUM shares the view that technical assistance and support is critical for the development of the sector, and is committed to continuing the dialogue on the opportunities for collaboration between both Sides, particularly programmes to support CARIFORUM practitioners.

EPA Opportunities and Benefits - Enhancing Knowledge and Awareness

- CARIFORUM remains committed to scaling up efforts, including through collaborative initiatives with the European Commission, to raise awareness of the EPA, with a particular focus on the region's private sector. In this regard CARIFORUM's strategy is to harness the expertise of relevant regional individuals and organizations, like the Caribbean Export Development Agency, in the delivery of outreach and awareness raising initiatives.
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**CARIFORUM-EU
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENT**

Brussels, 17 November 2017

CARIFORUM-UE 3653/17

DECISION

Subject: Decision No 2/2017 of the Joint CARIFORUM EU Council established by the Economic Partnership Agreement between the CARIFORUM States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, of 17 November 2017 as regards the establishment of a list of arbitrators

DECISION No 2/2017
OF THE JOINT CARIFORUM-EU COUNCIL
established by the Economic Partnership Agreement
between the CARIFORUM States, of the one part,
and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part,

of 17 November 2017

as regards the establishment of a list of arbitrators

THE JOINT CARIFORUM-EU COUNCIL,

Having regard to the Economic Partnership Agreement between the CARIFORUM States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, and in particular Article 221(1) thereof,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The list of fifteen arbitrators provided for in Article 221(1) annexed to this Decision is adopted by the Parties.

Article 2

The CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee may amend the list of arbitrators annexed to this Decision.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels on 17 November 2017

For the CARIFORUM States

K. JOHNSON SMITH

For the EU Party

C. MALMSTRÖM

List of arbitrators referred to in Article 221(1) of the Agreement

Arbitrators selected by the CARIFORUM States:

Ms. Tracy BENN-ROBERTS (Antigua and Barbuda)

Ms. Nicole FOSTER (Barbados)

Ms. Bertha COOPER – ROSSEAU (The Bahamas)

Ms. Michelle A. BROWN (Jamaica)

Ms. Fabiola MEDINA GARNES (Dominican Republic)

Arbitrators selected by the EU:

Mr. Jacques BOURGEOIS (Belgium)

Mr. Claus – Dieter EHLERMANN (Germany)

Mr. Pieter Jan KUIJPER (Netherlands)

Mr. Giorgio SACERDOTI (Italy)

Mr. Ramon TORRENT (Spain)

Arbitrators jointly selected by the Parties:

Mr. Frederick ABBOTT (United States)

Mr. James BACCHUS (United States)

Mr. Armand DE MESTRAL (Canada)

Ms. Claudia OROZCO (Colombia)

Mr. Helge SELAND (Norway)

**CARIFORUM-EU
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENT**

Brussels, 17 November 2017

CARIFORUM-UE 3652/17

DECISION

Subject: Decision No 1/2017 of the Joint CARIFORUM–EU Council established by the Economic Partnership Agreement between the CARIFORUM States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, of 17 November 2017, concerning the amendment of Annex IX to Protocol I: Overseas countries and territories

DECISION No 1/2017
OF THE JOINT CARIFORUM–EU COUNCIL
established by the Economic Partnership Agreement
between the CARIFORUM States, of the one part,
and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part,

of 17 November 2017

concerning the amendment of Annex IX to Protocol I:
Overseas countries and territories

THE JOINT CARIFORUM-EU COUNCIL

Having regard to the Economic Partnership Agreement between the CARIFORUM States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part (“the Agreement”), and in particular Article 41 of Protocol I thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Protocol I of the Agreement – *Concerning the Definition of the Concept of “Originating Products” and Methods of Administrative Cooperation* – defines Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) to mean the Overseas Countries and Territories set out in Annex IX thereto;
- (2) Following the change of status of Mayotte¹ and Saint-Barthélemy², and the entry into force of Council Decision 2013/755/EU on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union³, the list of overseas countries and territories in Annex IX to Protocol I of the Agreement should be updated,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

¹ Council Decision 2012/419/EU of 11 July 2012 amending the status of Mayotte with regard to the European Union (OJ EU L 204, 31.7.2012, p. 131).

² Council Decision 2010/718/EU of 29 October 2010 amending the status with regard to the European Union of the island of Saint-Barthélemy (OJ EU L 325, 9.12.2010, p. 4).

³ Council Decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013 on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union (OJ EU L 76, 15.3.2014, p. 56).

Article 1

Annex IX to Protocol I is replaced by the Annex which is annexed to this Decision.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels on 17 November 2017

For the CARIFORUM States

K. JOHNSON SMITH

For the EU Party

C. MALMSTRÖM

ANNEX IX to Protocol I

Overseas countries and territories

For the purposes of this Protocol “overseas countries and territories” means the following countries and territories referred to in Annex II to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union listed below:

(This list is without prejudice to the status of these countries and territories, or future changes in their status.)

1. Overseas countries and territories that have special relations with the Kingdom of Denmark:
 - Greenland.
2. Overseas countries and territories that have special relations with the French Republic:
 - New Caledonia and Dependencies,
 - French Polynesia,
 - Saint Pierre and Miquelon,
 - Saint Barthélemy,
 - French Southern and Antarctic Territories,
 - Wallis and Futuna.
3. Overseas countries and territories that have special relations with the Kingdom of the Netherlands:
 - Aruba,
 - Bonaire,

- Curaçao,
- Saba,
- Sint Eustatius,
- Sint Maarten.

4. Overseas countries and territories that have special relations with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

- Anguilla,
 - Bermuda,
 - Cayman Islands,
 - Falkland Islands,
 - South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands,
 - Montserrat,
 - Pitcairn,
 - Saint Helena and Dependencies,
 - British Antarctic Territory,
 - British Indian Ocean Territory,
 - Turks and Caicos Islands,
 - British Virgin Islands.
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CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)**Fourth meeting of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council**

Brussels, Belgium, 17 November 2017

Joint Communiqué

1. The Fourth Meeting of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) took place in Brussels, Belgium, on 17 November 2017. The Meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Cecilia Malmström, EU Commissioner for Trade and by Mr. Sven Mikser, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia and representing the EU Council. The CARIFORUM delegation included Ministers of CARIFORUM States and was led by Senator the Honourable Ms. Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica. EU Member States were also present.
2. The Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council is the highest body of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA and is vested with the responsibility of supervising the implementation of the EPA. The Council meets every two years for political discussion and to provide ministerial guidance for EPA implementation. The Meeting noted the recommendations emanating from the Third Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Parliamentary Committee, held on 31 October - 1 November 2017 in Trinidad and Tobago and the Third Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Consultative Committee, held on 6-7 November 2017 in Trinidad and Tobago, which reflect the important role those Committees have in EPA implementation and communication.
3. The Meeting received an EPA Implementation Progress Report from, and commended the performance of, the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee, the main subsidiary Joint Institution of the EPA, charged with overseeing, reviewing and supporting the implementation of the Agreement.
4. The Fourth Meeting provided an opportunity for the two Sides to consider the operation and implementation of the EPA since the Third Meeting which took place on 16 July 2015 in Guyana. Taking stock of EPA implementation, the Meeting noted the status of ratification of the EPA and urged those States that had not yet done so to urgently ratify the Agreement. The Meeting however acknowledged that while significant progress has been made on key implementation issues, including development cooperation and, agriculture and fisheries, challenges remain in other important areas of implementation such as services and cultural cooperation, and urged both Sides to work towards finding effective solutions.
5. Recalling a key finding of the first Five Year Review of the EPA that the conversion of market access offered by the Agreement into meaningful market presence remains a major challenge for CARIFORUM's services suppliers, the two Sides also discussed ongoing impediments with respect to market access and market presence. In this regard, it was agreed to establish a Special Committee on Trade in Services to address all trade matters related to services.

6. The Meeting highlighted the need for effective CARIFORUM access to EU goods and services markets, and adequate flanking measures. Both Sides also saw enhanced communication and awareness raising on the EPA as a key task and reaffirmed their commitment to coordinate efforts geared towards scaling-up knowledge and awareness on the opportunities and benefits of the EPA.
7. The Meeting achieved progress on outstanding implementing decisions, notably the general list of arbitrators required for dispute settlement under the EPA. The Meeting also noted the recent establishment of the Special Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries as a positive development and expressed satisfaction with the ongoing progress at the technical level regarding the protection of geographical indications.
8. Both Sides stressed the importance of implementing a joint mechanism for EPA monitoring, with the objective of having it in place in time to inform the second five year review of the EPA, scheduled for 2020.
9. The Meeting discussed development support for EPA implementation, welcoming the Caribbean Regional Indicative Programme, valued at €346 million, which has recently come on stream.
10. The Meeting called on the Trade and Development Committee and its Special Committees to continue making progress according to the recommendations of the Five Year Review, including implementation of all outstanding mandates of the Third Meeting of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council.
11. The Meeting expressed its deepest sympathy with the victims of the hurricanes that battered the Caribbean in recent months.
