

Economic Partnership Agreements

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Introduction:

EPAs are European Union's approach for WTO compliant trade regimes with ACP group states

Aim: Liberalization of 'substantially all trade'

WTO conformity means reciprocity

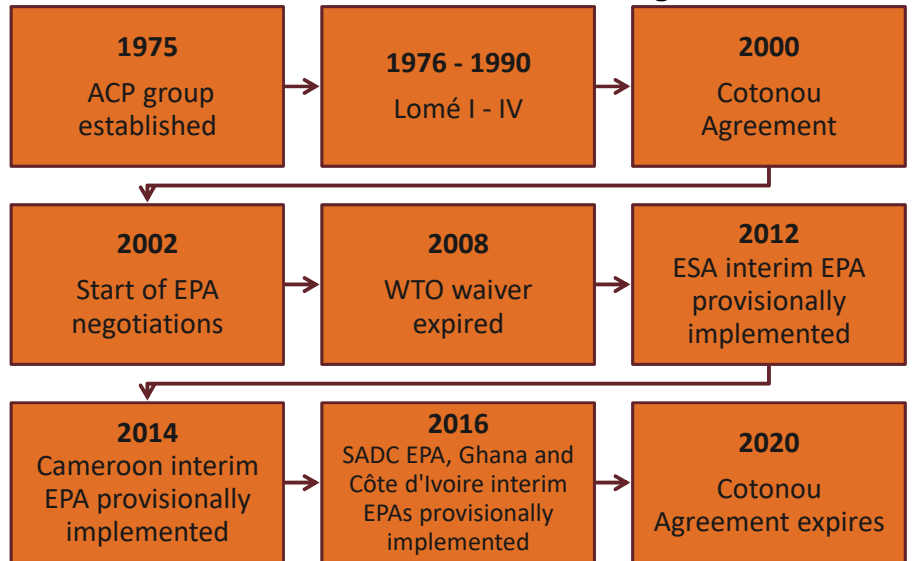
Recent trade regimes are preferential and asymmetric

Africa is split into 5 EPA groups

Diverse trade regimes and negotiation partners in Africa

Non-signatory states remain under EBA, GSP or GSP+

Timeline of EU-African trade regimes



Negotiations and implementation of EPAs are **not on schedule**.

Some countries refuse to sign the agreements for different **reasons**:

- Remaining under EBA still allows quota free and tariff free access (Example: Angola)
- Fear that industries are threatened by European competition (Example: Tanzania, Nigeria)
- Consensus within the regional group is urged and condition for signature (Example: Uganda)

Criticism:

- RECs are artificially divided
- Larger regimes (AfCFTA, TFTA) are not considered
- African markets are exposed to European products; this may hamper industrialization
- No multilateral definition of 'Substantially all trade' exists. More protection for African markets possible
- Loss of revenues will cause fiscal problems and undermine development

Liberalization



Reciprocal trade regimes open African markets for European products

Protection



Will African industries be able to develop with European products imported?

Spaghetti Bowl



EU divides the continent by its interests instead along existing RECs

AfCFTA



Ignoring the larger picture? EPAs must consider future pan-African plans

Quo vadis?

Only the SADC EPA is in force besides few interim EPAs. Many states decided to remain under EBA or GSP(+) regimes.

How will the AfCFTA affect the EU relations? Can Africa's trade boost and production diversify or will the EU remain the largest trading partner?

References

- European Commission, DG Trade
<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/development/economic-partnerships/>
- Mareike Meyn. *Economic Partnership Agreements: A 'historic step' towards a 'partnership of equals'?* London 2008.
- Gerhard Erasmus. *Are EPAs still on the African Agenda?* Stellenbosch 2017.

