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## Welcome by Karel De Gucht

*European Commissioner for Trade*

Dear reader,

The European Trade policy had a distinct Latin American flavour last month.

In a recent Summit in Madrid together with my Latin American and Caribbean counterparts, we deepened our trade relationships in many ways depending on the partners concerned.

We reached a comprehensive trade agreement with Colombia and Peru, we forged a trade deal on a regional basis with Central America, relaunched trade negotiations with Mercosur and held the first meeting of the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement Joint Council.



This is good news for the trade and development community. It is precisely because we face challenging times that we must open the doors wider for trade, thereby ensuring increased regional and economic stability.

Negotiations such as these are defining moments in a trade relationship. With Cariforum, we have set up the institutions that will accompany the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement.

Besides the Caribbean nations, the EU is also going further in its relations with the countries of Africa and the Pacific. Over the past months I have had the opportunity to discuss the progress of the European Partnership Agreements with several African groups. These agreements have the potential to create the framework for economies to place themselves regionally and globally. The history of global trade contains many precedents. I fully believe in this and will work hard to reach full and comprehensive agreements with the ACP countries in the future.

And the future is not that far way. The EU is currently re-thinking its trade policy for the future and we would be very much interested to know your opinion. In this edition of the Export Helpdesk newsletter you will learn how to make your views on the future trade policy known. You will also be informed on how the business community in developing countries uses the Export Helpdesk to access European markets.

I hope you enjoy reading the Newsletter!

*Big steps for a new trade relationship  
in the region*

## ***EU launches major new trade relationship with Latin America***

Leaders from the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean met in Spain in May for the EU-LAC Summit. They agreed on a range of trade deals, adding up to a new trade relationship with the region.

The leaders decided to give political approval to the trade agreement between the EU, Peru and Colombia as well as to re-launch negotiations for a free trade agreement between EU, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Finally, the leaders also concluded negotiations between the EU and Central America.

*"In the week that marks the 'first one hundred days' of the new European Commission mandate, I am delighted that we can show so clearly how the EU Trade agenda continues to break new ground and is key to our economic recovery. These latest trade deals with Latin America will translate into much needed jobs and growth for both sides." said EU Trade Commissioner De Gucht. "And it's precisely because we face challenging times that we must stand ready to do more business together to ensure increased regional and economic stability".*

The EU, Latin American and Caribbean leaders agreed on the need to conclude the Doha Round as soon as possible and fight protectionism. They also expressed deep satisfaction on the regional trade negotiations.

Finally, Commissioner De Gucht and Caribbean leaders held the first meeting of the Joint Council of the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement.

### **Andean countries (Colombia and Peru)**

In the margins of the Summit, the EU, Colombia and Peru leaders approved a comprehensive Trade Agreement covering in particular manufactured products, agricultural goods, services, investment, and trade rules.

This deal offers extensive new market access prospects for economic operators on both sides. The trade agreement also takes into account the different levels of development of the signatory countries by foreseeing a cooperation chapter aimed at promoting competitiveness and innovation facilitating technology transfers. Finally, it also contains the commitment of all parties to respect human rights and develop sustainable economies based on the protection and the promotion of labour and environmental rights.

### **Central America**

The EU and Central America concluded negotiations on an Association Agreement including a balanced and ambitious trade component.

Focusing on a region to region approach the EU began association talks with Central America in 2007 and resumed negotiations in February 2010 after an interruption due to the Honduran crisis.

This Association Agreement is seen as the backdrop for further bi-regional relations through political dialogue, cooperation and trade.

In 2008, the EU was the 2nd largest trade partner of the region with a stable market share of 10%.



### **Joint Council of the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement**

EU Trade Commissioner De Gucht and CARIFORUM Ministers<sup>1</sup> held the inaugural meeting of the Joint Council of the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on 17th May. The EU also welcomed Haiti as the new signatory of the EPA.

The Economic Partnership Agreement with the CARIFORUM countries was the first one to be signed and to enter into force.

Total EU trade with the Caribbean region amounts to more than €8.5 billion per year.

### **Relaunch of negotiations with Mercosur**

The European Commission recently launched its trade relations with Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (Mercosur). In 1995, the EU began free trade negotiations with Mercosur but these were suspended without agreement in 2004.

This agreement is especially important because in 2008, EU-Mercosur trade represented nearly as much as EU trade with the rest of Latin America taken together. That year, the EU was Mercosur's largest trading partner and its largest investor. In 2009, Mercosur ranked 8th among EU trading partners, accounting for 2.7% of total EU trade.

The EU is now ready to take a fresh look at these negotiations and believes there would be clear economic benefits of such a deal for both the EU and Mercosur.

<sup>1</sup> from Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.



Central America is getting closer to Europe

## Panama soon to have wider access the EU

The Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) is a trade arrangement through which the EU provides preferential access to the EU market to 176 developing countries by reducing the import taxes.

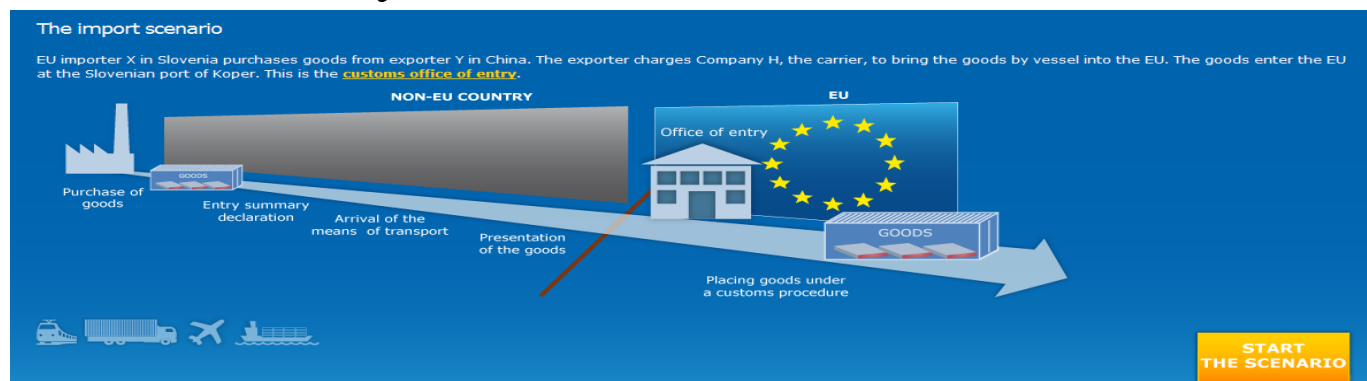
Alongside the standard GSP scheme, the EU also offers a special arrangement to encourage sustainable development and good governance, known as GSP+, which provides additional preferences –as duty-free access for instance-

But not every country can profit from this. To join the GSP+, a country must have implemented 27 international conventions in the fields of human rights, core labour standards, sustainable development and good governance. Fifteen countries are already benefiting from the GSP+ advantages: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Sri Lanka. Panama has just been approved by the EU and will join the GSP+ group as of 1 July 2010. There will be a new life in the EU-Panama trade scheme ahead!

Read more on the [GSP](#)

New European customs portal

## Customs security in a few clicks



The European Commission has just launched the '[European Customs Information Portal](#)', a new website with animated scenarios explaining complex customs rules and procedures.

The EU Customs Code ensures a uniform high level of protection through customs controls for all goods brought into the EU customs territory. This code has recently been amended with major changes, including an obligation for traders to provide customs with advance information on goods, and trade facilitation measures for reliable businesses. The new provisions aim to ensure smooth trade on the basis of effective risk analysis.

In this website you can find animated 'customs scenarios' that will lead you through the export and transit procedures step-by-step. You will access the legal framework of the EU Customs Union on import, export and transit procedures and links from the EU's and Member States' customs websites. Traders exporting goods to the EU will find here all necessary information regarding customs rules and regulations.



## *EPAs in brief*

*Economic Partnership Agreements*

*Mutual trust between countries the key to go forward*

### **EU Commissioner meets Eastern and Southern African Trade Ministers**

In April, EU Trade Commissioner De Gucht and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) representatives met for the first time since the signing of the interim EPA by Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe and Madagascar in 2009. The goal is to reach a comprehensive regional agreement with the ESA region beyond trade in goods, and covering services, investment, government procurement, competition etc.

*"We discussed the very real challenges in the region and agreed on the need for market creation" said Commissioner De Gucht. I was pleased to hear the ambitions to integrate African regional markets and encouraged my colleagues to sit together around a negotiating table. Both sides agreed to sort out pending issues that are inhibitors for trust – this is the type of relationship I want to have with all my partners."*

### **A step further for the East African Community**

Commissioner De Gucht met the East African Community Trade Ministers in Tanzania in June. Progress made in sanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, and customs and trade facilitation were appreciated. But both parties would need to accelerate negotiations if they wish to conclude a full and comprehensive EPA agreement by November 2010.

### **EU & Caribbean: One Year On**

Over 100 experts gathered in Barbados in April for a conference on the EPA "[One Year On: Regional Integration and Sustainable Development](#)". Key players at the negotiating process were there together with trade experts from all across the region. They discussed the EPA's content, meaning and value, as well as lessons learnt after a year of implementation.

### **Ouagadougou discussed the EPA**

European and West African officials met in June at technical level in Ouagadougou to discuss the way ahead in EPA negotiations. Talks progressed on rules of origin and the calendar for phasing out tariffs and dispute settlement. However, work is needed on West Africa's market access offer, agricultural subsidies, and the EPA implementation protocol. A follow-up meeting on rules of origin will be held in Brussels in July, while meetings at technical level are foreseen for September.



### **Southern African Development Community met EU counterparts**

In May, negotiators from EU and Southern African region met in Brussels to discuss the signing of the interim EPA for pending countries, its notification and implementation, and the way forward towards a "full" comprehensive regional EPA. Further technical negotiations will take place in Brussels in July, and a Senior Officials' meeting is scheduled for September in Africa prior to the November African Union-EU Summit.

### **Seychelles ratifies the interim EPA**

The EU welcomes the ratification in May of the EPA by the Seychelles. The Commission hopes that this ratification will encourage other members of the Eastern and Southern Africa group to ratify the interim EPA.

*Coordination is the key*

## Aid for Trade: going further



The EU Aid for Trade Strategy started in 2007 to assist developing countries to reinforce their capacity to trade.

It assists them to build new infrastructure, improve ports or help factories to meet international health and safety standards to export. Supporting developing countries to integrate into the world trading system will help them to use trade more effectively in the fight against poverty.

A year after the Strategy was born, aid from the EU reached an all-time high of € 10.4 billion, increasing by 48 % from the previous year.

Africa is still the region receiving most funds with € 4.6 billion last year, followed by Asia (€ 2.2 billion), Eastern Europe (€ 1.3 billion), America (€ 0.7 billion) and Oceania (€ 0.01 billion). Infrastructure, transport and energy were the main funded sectors.

The EU also decided to increase their funds to enhance negotiation capacity and the involvement of all sectors in trade negotiations. The target has been reached ahead of schedule investing € 2.15 billion in 2008.

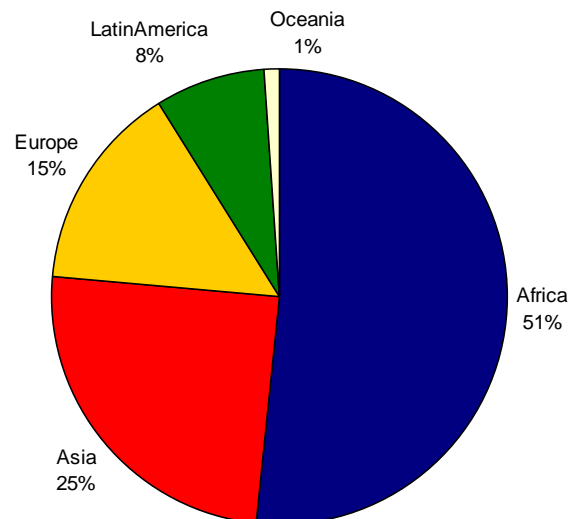
Nevertheless, the developing countries stressed increasing domestic ownership and regional trade as first steps to creating a solid basis for trade.

If you want to know more, the European Commission recently issued a communication on "[Aid for Trade Monitoring Report 2010](#)"

But, not everything ends here. We will go further. And the next steps are:

- To pay more attention to the least developed countries.
- To continue our efforts on trade regulation.
- To increase and update trade needs assessment
- To increase the number of countries which are beneficiaries of EU activities.
- To improve communication and information

### *Where did EU Aid for Trade funds go last year?*



### *Story from the ground*

## Dressed to export

Bangladesh has always managed to sustain a growing economy, largely thanks to its entrepreneurial private sector.

The country depends on a narrow export basket, with more than 80% of export earnings derived from clothing (85% exported to the EU and the US). But European consumers demand high-quality merchandise and Bangladesh needs to fulfil international quality standards as well as social compliance measures.



Improving products and productivity is a vital strategy for maintaining competitiveness in a global market and the EU has given €10 million to Bangladesh to support its efforts to meet these challenges through the development, strengthening and diversification of its production.

The Bangladesh Quality Support Programme works partly on the political level, to increase the knowledge and procedures to produce a high quality final product, and partly on the industry level developing continuous research and training and improving the facilities and technology in the country's two main export sectors: garments and fisheries.

The EU is helping Bangladesh to reach international standards and to diversify its exports. And the first tangible result is there: this project has motivated the creation of a private-public governing body for the National Institute for Textiles Training and Research.

## News in brief

What's on in the Trade & Development world



### The EU seeks your views on the future trade policy

The European Commission has just launched a public consultation on the future direction of EU trade policy. The EU's intention is to set out its policy during autumn 2010, explaining how trade policy can help achieve the objectives of the 'Europe 2020' Strategy. The Commission wants to gather views from relevant stakeholders regarding the rationale, scope and strategic objectives for a future EU trade policy. The consultation is open to all inside and outside the EU. Use this opportunity to give us your opinion! [Go to the online questionnaire](#). The closing date for this consultation is 28 July.

### Civil society has its voice on EU trade policy

"Including the public when discussing trade is essential if we are to respond to people's legitimate concerns about globalisation", said Commissioner De Gucht. "It is important that we tap into the wealth of experience, expertise and opinion in Europe."

The European Commission regularly organises meetings with civil society on a range of topics. The latest one took place in Prague where Commissioner De Gucht called for a debate on the role of trade policy in the current economic environment. The next one will take place in Brussels and will be devoted to the future trade policy. Other recent consultations included the EU-India SIA position, the state of play of the EPAs, the DDA negotiations on Trade Facilitation and the relation between Trade and Climate change.

Further information [here](#).



### A new EU General System of Preferences is cooking

The Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) is an autonomous trade arrangement through which the EU provides non-reciprocal preferential access to its market to 176 developing countries. As the current system expires in December 2011, the European Commission is currently working on a new proposal. To listen to all opinions, the Commission launched a public consultation from March to May 2010 and received 143 answers from development agencies, business associations, trade unions, research centres, NGOs, private companies and individuals. The contributions are currently being reviewed and will soon be published on the [GSP page of DG TRADE website](#).



The Commission has also asked for an [external evaluation](#) of the GSP system. The report has just been published and it underlines the efficiency of the GSP for increasing exports and welfare in Least Developing Countries. It notes however that the generally low level of 'EU Most Favoured Nation' tariffs and the structure of Least Developed Countries trade are big constraints and that the EU should focus on improving product coverage and rules of origin.

#### EVENTS IN THE TRADE & DEVELOPMENT WORLD

26-27 June in Canada  
**G20 Summit**

30 June- 1 July in Belgium  
**European Business Summit**

4-7 July in Jamaica  
**Conference of the CARICOM Heads of Government**

15-16 July in Ethiopia  
**Workshop on the Africa-EU Strategy**

26-27 July in Malawi  
**EPA meeting: EPA information seminar**

29-30 July in Switzerland  
**WTO General Council**

27 August in Swaziland  
**ESA EPA Council**

13-15 September in South Africa  
**EPA meeting: EPA information seminar**

## *Events in brief*

*The Export Helpdesk on the ground*

### **Export Helpdesk surprises Buenos Aires**

The Export Helpdesk was presented at the main export trade fair in Argentina, the [EXPO COMEX 2010](#), in Buenos Aires. The overall public reaction was one of "surprise" to discover the quantity of information available in the Export Helpdesk free of charge. The Argentinean exporters left the fair with a good working tool to facilitate their daily work.

### **Caribbean ready to export to EU**

Caribbean Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Business Support Organisation representatives got together in June in Barbados to explore the Export Helpdesk. They spent a day browsing the tool and researching information on the European market. At the end of the day, their market research and export preparation was done! The training programme is part of the project "Capacity Building to support the EPA Implementation in the Caribbean" supported by the Caribbean Export Promotion Agency and InWEnt, a capacity building consultancy that organises training on behalf of the European Commission.

### **2010 Food hygiene training session started**

Better Training for Safer Food is a European training initiative to familiarise producers with the EU requirements regarding food and feed, animal health, welfare and plant health. Workshops are organised in developing countries to help them to access the EU market. The first one this year took place in Peru.



#### **Safe Fish?**

*How can a Latin American exporter sell fish in the EU? First of all, he needs to fulfil the required health controls. We show you how to do it.*

That is why it was interesting for Latin American national authority control units and business representatives to attend the training organised by the EU on Safer Food in Peru last April. The workshop presented the Export Helpdesk together with the EU legislation for fishery and aquaculture products as well as the controls and provision needed to export. Trainers went into detail comparing EU and national legislation and giving hints on practical requirements during the whole catching, production, and labelling process.

Read more of [Better Training for Safer Food](#)

### **Export Helpdesk at the Africa-Europa Conference**

The "Institut de Promotion des Activités de Développement" organised the 1<sup>st</sup> Business Convention "AFRICA-EUROPA" in France in May. This convention was a B2B platform for African and European business. The Export Helpdesk did not miss this opportunity to meet 400 enterprises and to demonstrate how to use the Export Helpdesk.

### **Getting African business closer to the EU**

In May, the Trade Africa Network Tanzania and the African Union People's Empowerment Foundation organized an international conference in Tanzania to celebrate the African Day and to bring African business closer to Europe. InWEnt presented the Export Helpdesk to 200 African business managers under the workshop "EPA as new challenge". B2B meetings and discussions with high ranking personalities were also organised with the unique goal of getting Africa closer to Europe through trade.

### **Export Helpdesk is all around Peru**

Peruvian business is mainly made up of SMEs located outside the capital. For logistical reasons these companies lack information on how to access international markets. But the EU Delegation and the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs thought that if business can not move, they will. That is why they started three years ago the "PROMO UE" programme where they presented the Export Helpdesk to the business community all over the country. As a result, interest to access the EU market continues to increase.

### **Knocking on the neighbours' door**

Everyone aims to have closer relations to its neighbours and therefore Europeans are particularly interested in strengthening their relationship with the South Caucasus. To promote a better use of the trade opportunities offered to Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan under the special incentive for sustainable development and good governance of the EU Generalised System of Preferences (GSP+), seminars on "How to export to the EU" are being organised in the three South Caucasus countries in June and July 2010. National authorities and economic operators will receive first-hand information on the GSP+ regime and the Export Helpdesk, to help them accessing the EU market.

## Paraguay

has been making huge efforts to access the EU market.

In 2008 Paraguay exported goods worth for €489 million. In January 2009 Paraguay became a beneficiary of the special incentive GSP+ giving it additional trade preferences for access to the EU market.

So, with such advantageous conditions for Paraguayan businesses, it's time for them to export!

To assist Paraguayan exporters seize the new opportunities, the EU Delegation in Asunción organised a total of five seminars in 2009 and 2010 on "How to export to the EU?"

In doing so, they recommended visiting the Export Helpdesk website to find detailed information on the import tariffs they should pay, the import requirements they need to comply with and the customs documents they need and, last but not least, statistics to see whether other countries are already on the market.

These seminars covered most of the country's economic hubs. They also included hands-on workshops that were appreciated by business people due to their practical aspects.

They even became "groundbreaking news" in Paraguay, with TV programmes advertising them in primetime, and with radio news and press articles. The power of the media bore fruit immediately. The EU Delegation started receiving requests from Universities and business organisations to organize other Export Helpdesk workshops. The utility of the tool is now being acknowledged by present and future operators who always stress the practicality of the tool to get things moving!

For further information, please contact the EU Delegation in Paraguay at [delegation-paraguay@ec.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-paraguay@ec.europa.eu)



## Voice of the Delegations

News from the field

### Your opinion counts

#### Plasticizing Europe

The Export Helpdesk met Mr. Do Sy Toan, Managing Director of [MIDA Precision Mold Co](#), a plastic firm in Vietnam



#### How you did you get to know the Export Helpdesk?

I got to know the Export Helpdesk after attending a trade seminar jointly organised by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the EU Delegation. The seminar "EU-Vietnam Strategic Relations & Supporting Vietnamese Businesses to Approach the EU Market" was held in Ho Chi Minh City in May. There were several presentations, one of which was about the Export Helpdesk of the EU.

#### When was the last time you used it and why?

My last time of logging on was in late May 2010. I wanted to seek opportunities to export my products to the EU and to find trading partners in the EU.

#### What, in your opinion, is the main advantage of this tool?

It is user-friendly, it is available on the internet and it is so convenient for users to look up information.

#### What would you change to improve it?

To improve this database, I would add additional information, making it possible to access statistical reports with analysis that would offer the users an overview of commercial activities on each and every Member State of the EU (e.g. reports like Top 10 Companies, Top 100 or Top 500 Trading Enterprises...). Also, it would be a good idea if the websites of the leading companies and organisations in each sector in each Member State were linked to the Export Helpdesk.

