

Abstract

Title: Economic Partnership Agreements between CARIFORUM and the European Union: A Development Perspective

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Objective:

The Caribbean region has traditionally experienced a special and privileged relationship with the European Community. Nevertheless, the time has come for the Caribbean to fundamentally re-evaluate its partnership with Europe. After more than thirty (30) years of preferential treatment with the European Union (EU), the Caribbean have the opportunity to enter into an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union, by 2008 at the latest. Therefore, *in regard of historical linkages, twenty-five years of Lomé Agreement, the Cotonou Agreement and the forthcoming EPA's, can the Caribbean region survive these changes?*

Results:

The signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union in 2000; the Caribbean/ CARIFORUM has started negotiations with the European Commission on EPAs in April 2004. The EPA negotiations represent a major point of departure from ACP-EU trade cooperation relations on two fundamental scores. Firstly, the conclusion of EPAs will mark the end of the non-reciprocal trade agreements- the hallmark of the Lomé Conventions and the present transition period until December 2007 under the Cotonou Agreement. Secondly, a cluster of distinct regionally centred EPAs is likely to emerge in place of the traditional all ACP-EU trade agreement.

Conclusion:

Undoubtedly, these processes will have a significant bearing on the evolution of the Caribbean-EU relations.