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Dear Member of the INTA Committee,

This Friday the European Commission will propose delegated acts that would withdraw preferential market access from 6 African ACP countries: Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland.

We would like to ask you to reject these proposals as they have no ground and would unnecessarily cause economic damage to vulnerable developing countries.

Contrary to what the Trade Commissioner has mentioned in her letter of 4 July to INTA chairman MEP Bernd Lange, and contrary to the 1 October 2014 deadline, the Market Access Regulation has not set a 1 October 2016 deadline. The Market Access Regulation (Art.2.3.b) only says that preferential market access can be withdrawn if "*ratification of an agreement [...] has not taken place within a reasonable period of time such that the entry into force of the agreement is unduly delayed*".

It would seem to us that a "reasonable period of time" will not be exceeded on 1 October 2016 since the Southern African EPA has only been approved by the Council on 1 June and the Eastern African EPA only on 20 June.

As for the West African EPA, the signing of the agreement still awaits the conclusion of internal consultations in Nigeria, yet the proposed delegated acts will withdraw market access from Ghana and Ivory Coast. This may lead these countries to ratify or provisionally apply their un-amended 2007 bilateral interim EPAs, which will affect the whole region, including the 12 least developing countries.

We hope that you will reject the proposed delegated acts and allow the African regions and your colleagues in the national parliaments of the countries involved more time to properly examine their Economic Partnership Agreements.

Yours sincerely,

  
José Luis Gutiérrez Aranda

AEFJN Trade Policy Officer