



Conference

Africa-EU Relations

Wednesday, 8 July 2009, 10h00-15h30
EU Office of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

(Conference languages will be English and French.)

09h30 Registration and coffee

Session I: The Economic Partnership Agreements: Four Scenarios of West Africa's Future

When ACP countries and the EU agreed in 2000 to replace the non-reciprocal trade cooperation of the Lomé-era by a WTO compliant arrangement in the Cotonou Agreement, negotiations started on how to shape such a new trade scheme. However, as the deadline to conclude an arrangement came to a close at the end of 2007, significant disagreement remained on several critical issues. The EU Commission tried to accelerate negotiations by entering into bilateral talks with some countries, thus moving away from the initial regional approach. Since then, one full Economic Partnership Agreement could be signed with the CARIFORUM countries. With all other regions, negotiations go on.

In a series of workshops in Cotonou and Geneva, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung brought together officials of national, regional and international institutions, diplomats, representatives of trade unions, employers associations and civil society to discuss the possible effects of an EPA for the ECOWAS region in Western Africa. The experts developed four different scenarios, analysing how various sectors might be affected by the different possible negotiation outcomes. These scenarios are now presented in a publication that serves as a concise illustration of the stakes and implications of the different technical issues on the negotiation agenda and inspiration for decision-makers in the further negotiations of the EPAs.

10h00 Introduction by
Uta DIRKSEN, Head of Programme "Regional Economic Integration in Western Africa", Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cotonou

10h15 Presentation of the study
El Hadji DIOUF, EPAs and Regionalism Programme Manager, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, Geneva

10h45 Panel discussion with
El Hadji DIOUF, EPAs and Regionalism Programme Manager, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, Geneva
Claude MAERTEN, Head of Unit "Economic Partnership Agreements 1", DG Trade, European Commission

Claire COURTEILLE, Advisor on Economic and Social Policy, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Moderated by

Uta DIRKSEN, Head of Programme "Regional Economic Integration in Western Africa", Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Cotonou

11h30 Open discussion

12h00 Lunch buffet

Session II: The African Union: Prospects for further Integration and Relations to the EU

The foundation of the African Union in 2002 was regarded as a political and institutional restart on the African continent, with a stronger continental organization living up to its responsibility for its citizens. The establishment of new structures, like the AU Peace and Security Council, as well as the Pan African Parliament, the African Court for Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court of Justice, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and the integration of NEPAD and APRM into the AU were seen as signs for a more democratic, proactive African Union. The principle of 'Afro-Responsibility' was supposed to replace Afro-Pessimism. As opposed to the former Organization for African Unity, the integration logic of the AU is not only focused on governments, but also on members of parliaments, political parties, entrepreneurs and civil society actors. While the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are seen as "an integral part of the Union and its transition towards the United States of Africa" (report of the AU Assembly; February 2009), its relationship to the AU Authority remains however unclear.

In which areas do the RECs have a comparative advantage? Or does the AU Authority rather have to promote rationalization of the RECs and coordinate their programmes' activities? And what role does the Joint Africa-EU Strategy play in furthering African continental integration?

13h30 Panel discussion with

René N'Guettia KOUASSI, Director of Economic Affairs at the African Union Commission, Addis Abeba

Ade ADEFUYE (tbc), Advisor to the ECOWAS President on Democracy and Good Governance, Abuja

Michael CHEGE, Advisor on International Development Policy in the Ministry of Planning, Nairobi

Isabelle GARZON (tbc), Deputy Head of Unit "Economic development: Infrastructure and communication networks, trade and regional integration", DG Development, European Commission

Moderated by

Sabine FANDRYCH, Resident Representative of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Addis Abeba

14h30 Open discussion

15h30 Coffee & pastries