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1711 Working group News on Trade – November 2017

1. Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA): Ivory Coast unveils its strategy

Ivory Coast has presented its implementation strategy for EPA 2017-2020 with the EU. It is divided into five areas: EPAs' national governance, strengthening its national ownership, the implementation of reforms, the promotion of businesses and the achievement of structuring investments. AEFJN deplores the fact that the implementation of the EPAs will not contribute to the competitiveness of the economy nor to increasing the production, processing and export capacity of Ivorian agricultural and industrial products. Ivory Coast has the highest intra-African trade rate, estimated at 34% compared with an average of 12% for the continent. [Read more](#)

2. Madagascar: tough negotiations for EPAs

Despite the positive figures regarding the implementation of EPAs, Madagascar still needs to diversify its products and become more industrialized. Non-tariff barriers alongside technical or health standards and regulations governing companies and national enterprises increase the problem. Only 2% of medium-sized and small businesses are expanding internationally. The report on non-tariff barriers to trade of the European Parliament also specifies the existence of disproportionate or discriminatory regulatory measures for Malagasy enterprises. These generate fees or costs for Malagasy companies.

[Read more](#)

3. The EU28 dumping of cereals, dairy and meat to the ESA-4 in 2016

The ESA-4-EU EPA was signed by four countries – Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe – and has been provisionally applied since 2012. The ESA-4 EPA is considered as an interim EPA although not a regional one. Each ESA-4 Member States (MS) has its own schedule and degree of liberalization for its imports from the EU, going from 80% in Zimbabwe to 81% in Madagascar, 96% in Mauritius and 98% in the Seychelles. The analysis presented by Jacques Berthelot is limited to an in-depth assessment of the EU28 subsidies to its exports of cereals and dairy to the EPA-4 in 2016. 2016 was the first year of full implementation of all the schemes under the reformed structure of direct payments as decided in the 2013 CAP reform. [Read more](#)

4. The treaty on transnational corporations and human rights enters “negotiation mode”

The third session of the UN inter-governmental working group was held in Geneva at the end of October moving towards decisive negotiations on a binding treaty on transnational corporations (TNCs) and human rights, despite challenges from the EU with support from the US. The closing Recommendations of the Chair-Rapporteur committed to a road-map for the negotiation process for the fourth working group session in 2018. Current measures to prevent human rights violations and abuses in the operations of TNCs are not sufficient. While TNCs benefit from a wide range of investor protection mechanisms and loopholes in international law, the people who lose their lives, livelihoods and territories because of TNCs' activities are often repeatedly denied justice. [Read more](#)