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Working Group News on Trade March 2018

1. EPA: Senegal must undo its commitment

The FRANCE DEGAGE platform has denounced that the Senegalese government has taken an anti-national decision by signing the EPA, even hiding from the people the truth about what technicians tell about the negative consequences on the national economy. The Directorate General of Economic Policy organized in July 2016 a workshop on the EPA between West Africa and the European Union and its implications in Senegal and gave recommendations to protect the economy of the country and region. But why did the State of Senegal neither make this report public nor listen to the recommendations of this workshop? [Read more](#)

2. Benin's difficult integration into the ECOWAS Free Trade Area

The African's heads of state met in March in Rwanda to sign an agreement launching the largest free trade area in the world. While this free-trade area is trying to set itself up, another is already at the regional level, in West African region. But Benin seems to have difficulties and Trade inside the region remains weak. Some barriers have been raised between countries but expectations regarding the movement of people and goods remain unfulfilled. [Read more](#)

3. The European Union agrees to restart discussions on EPAs with CEMAC

Following its withdrawal in 2017, the European Union has returned to better sentiments regarding the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with all six countries (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, CAR, Equatorial Guinea and Chad) of the Economic and Monetary Community of Africa (CEMAC). The two parties agreed to relaunch the technical discussions with a view to the accession of the CEMAC countries to the interim agreement with Cameroon and to find a common ground on accompanying measures that would take the form between others, support for economic reforms aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of local industries. [Read more](#)

4. 44 African nations sign pact establishing free trade area: AU

Forty-four African countries have signed an agreement establishing a free trade area seen as vital to the continent's economic development. The creation of a free trade area — billed as the world's largest in terms of participating countries — comes after two years of negotiations, and is one of the AU's flagship projects for greater African integration. However, the agreement will still have to be ratified at a national level. Nigeria is notably absent from the signatories. Nigeria hesitated after objections from business leaders and unions — a sign that getting the deal through scores of national parliaments may face several hurdles. [Read more](#)