EC/East African Community EAC Partner States agreement: framework for Economic Partnership Agreement FEPA

2008/0169(NLE) - 30/09/2008 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to propose the conclusion of an agreement establishing a framework for an **Economic Partnership Agreement** between the European Community and its Member States, on one part, and the East African Community (EAC) Partner States, on the other part.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: the framework for an Economic Partnership Agreement (FEPA) has been negotiated to avoid disrupting trade with the Community on the expiry of the trade regime set out in Annex V of the Cotonou Agreement on 31 December 2007 and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) waiver covering that trade regime.

These negotiations were concluded by the initialling of the FEPA on 27 November 2007 before the expiry of the trade regime.

As a result all 5 EAC Partner States:

- Burundi,
- Kenya,
- Rwanda,
- Tanzania,
- Uganda

were included in the list of countries in Annex 1 of the EPA Market Access Regulation adopted by Council Regulation (EC) No 1528/2007 and have benefited from the Community market access offer made in the context of EPAs from 1 January 2008. Their inclusion on this list will become permanent following ratification of FEPA by all parties. This will ensure a harmonised **trade regime** with the EU providing improved market access for all EAC Partner States, including the countries recognised as Least Developed Countries by the United Nations.

The negotiation of a full EPA continues consistently with the directives for EPAs with ACP States adopted by Council on 12 June 2002.

CONTENT: the Commission requests the Council to conclude the FEPA on behalf of the Community.

FEPA is an agreement establishing a framework for an EPA the scope of which will be extended by the outcome of negotiations for a comprehensive EPA reached by July 2009. It includes all the measures necessary to establish a Free Trade Area compatible with the provisions of Article XXIV of the GATT 1994 (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).

This agreement also contains provisions on:

- rules of origin,

- non-tariff measures,
- trade defence measures,
- dispute avoidance and settlement,
- fisheries and administrative.

Institutional provisions: the Agreement also contains provisions on administrative and institutional provisions. The institutional provisions include an EPA Council composed of representatives of the Parties to be responsible for the implementation of the agreement.

Provisional application: pending the entry into force of the FEPA, the Agreement foresees the provisional application of the Agreement (refer to COM(2008)0521).

The European Parliament will be called upon to give its assent to the conclusion of the FEPA.