

EU/SADC EPA States Economic Partnership Agreement

2016/0005(NLE) - 19/07/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on International Trade adopted the report by Alexander Graf LAMBSDORFF (ADLE, DE) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the SADC EPA States, of the other part.

The committee recommended the European Parliament to **give its consent** to the conclusion of the Agreement.

The committee recalled that the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which are trade and development partnerships between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States and the European Union, are aimed at supporting trade, regional integration and the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy, along with fostering their sustainable development.

While insisting on the overall favourable effects of the SADC EPA, Members stated that it is important to strengthen the monitoring provisions in the agreement. They called for the establishment of a sustainable-development dialogue and relevant participative processes for monitoring. Members stressed their regret at the absence of a Joint Parliamentary Committee and a Joint Consultative Committee to improve this type of dialogue.

Overall, Members recommended giving consent to the SADC - EU Economic Partnership Agreement given that it has the potential to bring fundamental positive change and contribute to sustainable economic growth and deepened intra-regional trade and integration.

However, the trade and partnership agreement can only be a small part of a **larger strategy**. The SADC states should conduct trade and development-friendly domestic policies and pursue **structural reforms**. The regulatory framework that attracts investment is another element in the equation. These countries should also consider using the potential of the EPA by going beyond trade in goods only and also address **services** in the future.

According to Members, the EU should provide assistance in terms of capacity building and trade related assistance.