Development Compatibility of EPAs?
A critical civil society review of the EU-ACP negotiations on Regional Free Trade Agreements

Since the suspension of the WTO negotiations for the conclusion of the „Doha Development Round” in July 2006 attention has shifted to bilateral and regional trade agreements. The EU is concentrating on the current “Economic Partnership Agreements” (EPAs) with 78 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP Group). The declared goal of these negotiations are six regional WTO-compatible Free Trade Agreements with an ambitious agenda to overcome existing trade barriers and to foster development.

The negotiations, to be concluded by the end of 2007, have entered their decisive phase as concrete draft texts are presently being discussed in most of the six regional groupings. At the same time critical voices in ACP states pointing out the serious risks of EPAs in their present form are growing louder by the day. Untimely reciprocal liberalisation of market access, services, investments and public procurement is said to be undermining development goals and targets in the ACP states. Therefore the German Government holding the EU presidency in the first half of 2007 will be challenged in a special way to influence the shaping of EPAs so that they live up to the stated claim of being instruments of development.

In parallel to the presently initiated official review process of the state of negotiations this conference undertakes a critical review of the envisaged EPAs from a civil society perspective. Together with international guests from Africa and the EU we intend making a critical assessment to which degree EPAs correspond to the development principles enshrined in the Cotonou framework and to the development needs of mostly structurally weak and vulnerable ACP states.

The conference focuses on three particular problem areas of EPAs.
(1) Are EPAs endangering food sovereignty and rural development of mostly agrarian oriented ACP states? (2) Are EPAs in their current form undermining autonomous initiatives of regional integration? (3) What effects are to be expected from a broad liberalisation agenda including the so called “new issues” of investments, competition and public procurement? These are the main issues that civil society representatives from the ACP and Europe together with political decision makers and academics are going to confront and critically evaluate.

Venue and Directions

Gustav-Stresemann-Institut
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D-53175 Bonn
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We are quick to reach and easy to find ...

... by car
Right side of Rhine: A 3, until motorway-crossing Bonn/Siegburg
A 560, Bonn until motorway-crossing St. Augustin
A 59, Bonn-Bad Godesberg until motorway-crossing Bonn-Ost (42)
A 562 until exit Rheinaneue, then turn left;
next traffic-light: turn right into Heinemann Strasse
100 m after next traffic-light: U-turn left, parking after
100 m on the right

Left side of Rhine:
A 61, until motorway-crossing Meckenheim
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From Bonn central-station: U-Bahn Line (underground/tram number) 16 or 63, direction Bad Godesberg,
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From airport Cologne/Bonn:
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From Bonn central-station: see above

International Conference
5 October, 2006

Gustav-Stresemann-Institut, Bonn

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Programme

9.30 Welcome and Introduction
Theo Kneifel, KASA

10.00 I. Moving ahead?
State of play and prospects of EPA negotiations
Vincent Roza, ECDPM, Maastricht
Marc Maes, 11.11.11, Belgien

11.00 Coffee | Tea Break

11.15 II. Overcoming rural poverty through free trade?
The impact of reciprocal liberalisation on food sovereignty and rural development
Sebastian Graf von Keyserlingk, BMELV
Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah, GAWU, Ghana
Rudolf Buntzel, EED
Chair: Marita Wiggerthale, Oxfam

13.00 Lunch

14.00 III. How fundamental is ownership?
Policy space between regional integration and interregional market liberalisation
Alexis Valqui, BMZ, Berlin
Malcolm Damon, Economic Justice Network of FOCCISA, Südafrika
Douglas Kivumbi, SEATINI, Uganda
Chair: Dieter Simon, KOSA, Bielefeld

15.30 Coffee | Tea Break

15.45 IV. No recipe for development?
Impact of the liberalisation of investments and services in an EPA-framework
Gyekye Tanoh, Third World Network, Ghana
Miriam vander Stichle, SOMO, Niederlande
n.n, ACP-Ambassador Malawi, Brussels
Chair: Klaus Schilder, WEED

17.15 Summing up
Michael Frein, EED

17.30 Conclusion of the Conference

Language: German and English | * invited

Registration and Fees

Please register as soon as possible, but at the latest by 1. October, 2006.
For registration please send an e-mail to nad.bonn@netzwerkafrika.de, giving your full name, address, e-mail, phone number and the name of your organisation. Please indicate if you need an accommodation.
The registration fee is 20 Euro. The fee includes the costs of a meal.
Fees can be paid during the conference.

Further Information

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