

Visit of Karel De Gucht to Kenya: extracts from the press conference

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During his visit to Kenya on 15 July 2013, Karel de Gucht, Member of the EC in charge of Trade, held a press conference on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations between the EU and the Eastern African Community (EAC).



HEURE	DESCRIPTION	DUREE
00:00:00	Title	00:00:05
00:00:05	SOUNDBITE by Karel de Gucht, Member of the EC in charge of Trade, (in ENGLISH):Our trade relationship is very important: the EU is Kenya's biggest trading partner, with 25% of Kenya's exports actually going to the EU. Over the last 5 years, Kenya's exports continued to grow and stood at 1 billion euro in 2012. This success story is based on Kenya's free access to the EU's market, guaranteed by a temporary instrument pending Kenya's ratification of the 2007 framework Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).But if we want this success story to continue; we need to go further. The full Economic Partnership Agreement we are	00:01:15

currently negotiating would not only make Kenya's existing free access to the EU market permanent. It would also deepen our trade relations in a host of areas, by reducing trade barriers, simplifying customs procedures, and by improving trade-related cooperation. That's a true upgrade which would be tailored to Kenya's specific development needs.

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SOUNDBITE by Karel de Gucht (in ENGLISH): However, we are at a critical juncture today. While Kenya played a crucial role when the East African Community initialled the framework Economic Partnership Agreement in 2007, EAC members decided not to sign this framework Economic Partnership Agreement in 2010. This created a situation which is both irregular and unfair:

- irregular because it is not consistent with European Union and World Trade Organisation rules;
- and unfair towards other countries that not only initialled but also signed an Economic Partnership Agreement. The European Union adopted in May the amendment of the Market Access Regulation, thereby clarifying the options available to ACP countries in their choice

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of the trading relationship they wish to have with the European Union. But let me be clear on one thing: This amendment was never a deadline for negotiations. While we need closure on the agreements initialled in 2007, on-going EPA negotiations may continue as long as they have the prospect to bear fruit. We now have a historic opportunity to conclude a comprehensive regional Economic Partnership Agreement. If we have the political will on both sides to make it a reality, we can achieve it. In any case, I instructed my negotiators not to come back empty-handed.

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SOUNDBITE by Karel de Gucht (in ENGLISH): Before I conclude, let me make a final important point: Because there is a second critical juncture lying ahead of us. I am referring to the upcoming 9th WTO Ministerial Conference taking place in Bali in December this year. One area where trade ministers have agreed to make progress is so-called "trade facilitation", which means to remove red tape and avoid unnecessary procedures at customs. And if there is one thing we already agree on today, then it is the fact that this will significantly benefit ACP countries. As

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...a matter of fact, it would help countries to be part of global value chains – because easier border controls means reducing costs for both import and export. The European Union, Kenya and all ACP countries jointly have a joint responsibility to work towards making Bali a success. We have no time to lose. I believe that this is true for multilateral trade liberalisation, but also for our EPA. The rewards will certainly repay our efforts.

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Cutaways of the press conference (4 shots)

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