



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 17.12.2018
C(2018) 8797 final*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion on the Recommendation for a Council Decision authorising the opening of negotiations on a Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States {COM(2017) 763 final}.

Following discussions in the Council, a Decision authorising the European Union negotiator to start negotiations for a partnership agreement between the Union and the countries of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group of States was adopted on 22 June 2018. The Council annexed the negotiation directives to its Decision. The Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States adopted their negotiation mandate on 29 May 2018. In July, the negotiations were opened through the exchange of letters and mandates. The timing was fully in line with the Cotonou Agreement in place, which requires that negotiations on how to govern future relations start eighteen months before the end of the total period of the Agreement itself.

The negotiations started on 28 September 2018 in New York, in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, and are currently under way. Commissioner Neven Mimica is the Chief Negotiator for the European Union, in close collaboration with the High Representative for the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President Federica Mogherini.

In accordance with Article 218(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Commission will conduct the negotiations in consultation with the designated special committee in the Council, in which the Portuguese government is represented. Further, in accordance with Article 218(10) TFEU, the Commission will inform the European Parliament fully and immediately, at all stages of the negotiating procedure.

The Commission welcomes the Assembleia da República's engagement to monitor the negotiation process. Its Opinion has been forwarded to the relevant Commission services and will inform the negotiation process.

*Ms Regina BASTOS
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the Assembleia da República
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*cc. Mr Eduardo FERRO RODRIGUES
President of the
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The Commission looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Neven Mimica
Member of the Commission*