

# ACP Sugar Group disappointed with the reported negotiating stance of the EU with Mercosur

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Brussels, 27 November 2017/ ACP: The ACP Sugar Group are deeply concerned with the recent news that the EU plans to modify its market access offer to Mercosur to include sensitive products, among them sugar, during the next round of trade talks between 4 and 10 December.

This is contrary to the consistent assurances on sugar and other sensitive products given by the European Commission to the ACP Group, most recently by Commissioner Malmström at the Joint ACP-EU Ministerial Trade Committee in October 2017 where she stated that, *“When negotiating with other parties, we keep in mind the potential impact on the EU-ACP trade relationship. The EU’s defensive interests largely correspond to the ACP Group’s identified interests. Sensitive products, including bananas, sugar, rum, beef and rice, are thus given a particular treatment.”*

The ACP Group has always expressed deep reservations about the abolition of EU domestic quotas because we clearly foresaw when the idea of abolishing quotas was first proposed in 2011, that the effect would lead to devastating decreases in ACP and LDC exports to the EU and hence yet further erode the value of our trade preference for sugar under the EPAs and IEPAs.

Until now, these trade preferences have contributed hugely to sustainable socio-economic development in ACP and LDC countries. At the same time, it is expected that the EU will now more than double the quantity of sugar it exports to the world markets, including to some ACP markets.

Speaking on behalf of the ACP Sugar Group, the Chairman of the ACP Sugar Subcommittee and Ambassador of Belize to the EU, H.E. Dylan Vernon, underlined that further opening of the EU sugar market, coming immediately after the abolition of EU domestic sugar production quotas and the introduction of coupled subsidies for EU sugar beet, will be a severe additional blow to the ACP suppliers.

To add further supply to the EU sugar market at a time where ACP and LDC suppliers are being forced to divert sugar to other markets and existing TRQs are left unfilled will mean that the residual economic value of duty-free quota-free access to the EU market for sugar under Economic Partnership Agreements and the “Everything But Arms Initiative” is all but nullified.

The ACP Group has called on the European Union for urgent consultations on this matter as provided for under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

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