Overview of the CARIFORUM-EC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

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Background

The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) was signed by the 27 European Union member states and 14 CARIFORUM states (all except Haiti) in October 2008 and it came into effect through provisional application in December 2008. It replaces the trade provisions of the Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000, in which the European Community unilaterally granted African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries non-reciprocal market access to Europe on more favourable terms than those enjoyed by goods from other countries. There was special access for some traditional exports like sugar, rum, rice into the European market which was very important to ACP countries.

The Cotonou’s non-reciprocal trade preferences required a waiver in the World Trade Organization (WTO) because it was contrary to the basic rule enshrined in Article 1 of the GATT, that all members must be treated no less than any other member (most favoured nation (MFN) principle) unless they belong to a regional trade agreement or economic integration agreement which meets the substantive criteria of Article XXIV of the GATT or Article V of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) respectively. In exchange for the waiver, the EU and ACP states had agreed to replace the Cotonou preferential trade arrangement with a reciprocal, WTO-compatible agreement by the end of 2007. The CARIFORUM-EC EPA is the first EPA to be completed between Europe and one of the six sub-regions of the ACP.

WHAT ARE PREFERENCES?

A preference is a concession offered in a trade agreement by a Party to another without offering that same concession to a third Country. For instance in the LOME Convention the European Community offered duty free quota free market access for a range of products that originated from the Africa Caribbean and Pacific Regions and exported to the EC Market.

CARIFORUM members of the EPA: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago

European Union members of the EPA: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
The EPA contains rules to ensure that trade and investment between CARIFORUM and the European Union is conducted on a transparent and predictable basis while accommodating the marked differences in size and level of development between the two regions.

Objectives

The EPA as a trade agreement with development components, is designed to open up and enhance trade between Europe and CARIFORUM by removing the barriers to trade between them and by improving CARIFORUM’s capacity to trade competitively. Through enhanced open trade, it is expected that the EPA will:

- Expand and improve CARIFORUM’s industries and economic growth by enabling CARIFORUM States to develop exports in services and a wider range of goods in which they have a comparative advantage;
- Increase employment and business opportunities;
- Improve CARIFORUM’s access to European technology and technical ‘know how’;
- Increase competition within CARIFORUM and thereby improve efficiency in production processes.

The EPA is divided into six parts and contains annexes and protocols. The main sections are as follows:

Part I: Trade Partnership for Sustainable Development

Part II: Trade and Trade-related Matters
   - Title I. Trade in Goods
   - Title II. Investment, Trade in Services and E-commerce
   - Title III. Current Payments and Capital Movements
   - Title IV. Trade-related Issues

Part III: Dispute Avoidance and Settlement

Part IV: General Exceptions


Part VI: General and Final Provisions

Seven Annexes (Due to its size, the CARIFORUM Schedule of Tariff Liberalization for goods from the EC (Appendix to Annex III) is contained in a separate document but all the schedules for services and investment (Annex IV) are included in the main EPA document).

Three Protocols
- Final Act

Part II: Trade and Trade-related Matters

TITLE 1: TRADE IN GOODS

CHAPTER 1
CUSTOMS DUTIES

In keeping with the concept of special and differential treatment, CARIFORUM States will reduce tariffs on imported goods, but not to the same extent, or at the same pace as Europe. In addition, less onerous commitments have been agreed upon for the smaller CARIFORUM states.

Highlights

- Immediate duty-free/quota-free market access for all CARIFORUM goods into the EU except rice and sugar. (This was implemented in January 2008). In the case of rice and sugar, full liberalization will not occur until 2010 and 2015 respectively.
- On the other hand, CARIFORUM is not obliged to begin reducing its tariffs on items subject to phased reduction commitments, until 2011. This is what is referred to as the 3-year moratorium. This group of items includes products which either have a high degree of revenue sensitivity or are produced by domestic industries which require a degree of protection from the competition posed by imports.
- Tariffs on very sensitive goods such as food items and processed food imported into CARIFORUM will not be removed. Altogether 13.1 % of products imported from Europe will continue to be subject to tariffs. These products makeup the Exclusions List.
- Tariffs have been a significant source of revenue for some CARIFORUM States so they will reduce tariffs on products from the EU gradually in several Phases. This will allow CARIFORUM time to find alternative revenue sources and...
for CARIFORUM industries to adjust to increased competition. The tariff liberalization regime is as follows:

- In 2009 CARIFORUM will remove tariffs on 52.8% of the goods imported from Europe pursuant to the commitment to apply a zero rate of duty on these goods at this time. The revenue impact on the CARIFORUM States associated with the liberalization of these products will either non-existent or relatively minor, as prior to the conclusion of the EPA, most of these products already faced applied rates of zero percent or close to zero percent;
- In five years from the date of application of the EPA (2013), CARIFORUM will remove tariffs on 56% of the goods imported from Europe;
- In 10 years or by 2018, tariffs will be removed from 61.1% of the goods imported from Europe;
- In 15 years or by 2023, 82.7% will be liberalized;
- In 20 years or by 2028, 84.6% will be liberalized;
- In 25 years or by 2033, tariffs on the remaining CARIFORUM products will be eliminated, and this will take the total level of liberalization to 86.9%.

- Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle– The CARIFORUM States or the EU must give the same terms to the other side if under another trade agreement concluded after the EPA:
  - The EU gives to a non-CARIFORUM country or group more advantageous treatment than those in the EPA.
  - CARIFORUM States extend to a “major trading economy” treatment which is more advantageous than that offered to Europe under the EPA.
  - Rules of Origin (RoO) govern the identification of goods that will qualify for preferential treatment under the EPA. The EPA RoO are based on the structure and principles of those contained in the Cotonou Agreement. There has, however, been some relaxation of the qualifying conditions for a number of products, thereby making it easier for CARIFORUM producers to export to the EC. Examples of these products are biscuits and other bakery products, jams and jellies, fruit juices and other beverages, garments, and air conditioning units. As was the case under the Cotonou Agreement, inputs obtained from any CARIFORUM country, the EC, other ACP countries (with some exceptions) and, under certain conditions, neighbouring developing countries, will qualify as “originating goods” and so can be used in the production of final goods that will qualify for preferential treatment.

CHAPTER 2
TRADE DEFENCE MEASURES

This chapter outlines the circumstances appropriate for either CARIFORUM or Europe to impose temporary barriers to trade, including tariffs.

Highlights
- Permitted use of Safeguards, which are barriers to trade imposed temporarily to prevent injury to domestic industries caused by imports:-
  - In cases where increased imports from the other side as well as third state sources are causing injury to a domestic industry, the CARIFORUM States and Europe can invoke the WTO Safeguard Clause subject to the terms and conditions of Article XIX of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT);
  - The CARIFORUM States and Europe can resort to the use of a bilateral safeguard mechanism created by the Agreement for a limited period of time in the event that the importation of goods from the other side only, causes or threatens to cause: (a) serious injury to domestic industries; or (b) sectoral disturbances that cause major social problems; or (c) disturbances to agricultural markets or mechanisms that regulate those markets. These safeguards are not subject to the WTO dispute settlement provisions.
- Permitted use of Anti-Dumping Duties in accordance with corresponding WTO provisions to prevent the unfair and predatory trade practice of selling goods in overseas markets at less than their cost of production.
- In accordance with the WTO Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, Countervailing Measures such as duties can be employed to prevent unfair competition between subsidized imports and competing domestic products.
CHAPTER 3:
NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

This chapter addresses the reduction of the use of other measures other than tariffs such as quotas and import or export licenses which, by way of their application impede trade. Both sides agreed not to apply quantitative restrictions, including import licenses. The rules also seek to ensure there is no unfair competition between imports and like domestic products within the domestic market.

Highlights

- The EPA reaffirms the provision of the GATT to the extent that discrimination against imports is prevented through the application of the National Treatment (NT) principle:-
  - No charges and internal taxes may be applied to imports if they are not similarly applied to like domestic products;
  - Regulations and laws affecting internal sale, offers for sale, purchase, transportation, distribution or use of a product, must be applied to both the imports and similar domestic products;
  - The application of the NT principle in the EPA does not prevent a government from offering domestic support to national producers.

Although Europe is obliged to eliminate export subsidies on products which the CARIFORUM countries have agreed to liberalize, the CARIFORUM countries are able to maintain this type of subsidy on their products for the duration of the transition periods afforded to developing countries by both the Agreement on Agriculture and the SCM.

CHAPTER 4
CUSTOMS AND TRADE FACILITATION

The Chapter sets out to improve customs and trade administrative procedures to ensure that trade between CARIFORUM and Europe is made easier and that trading procedures are more predictable.

Highlights

- Transparency, efficiency, accountability and integrity of CARIFORUM’s and Europe’s respective customs operations are required through commitments to:
  - reduce, simplify and standardize customs data and documentation;
  - simplify procedures for goods clearance;
  - publicly disclose customs laws, procedures and explanations of such laws and procedures;
  - cooperate and dialogue between CARIFORUM and Europe.
- The provision of financial and non-financial support to CARIFORUM to assist in:
  - Development of modern customs techniques;
  - Automation of customs and other trade procedures;
  - Compliance with relevant international standards and regulations including WTO rules, the Kyoto Convention and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

CHAPTER 5
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Agriculture and fisheries are an important part of the EPA. There is a chapter dedicated to the issues, which addresses the development needs of these sectors and commits the EU to providing support in a range of areas, e.g. research, downstream processing, improving production and quality standards, and promoting investment. A special process of dialogue between the two sides will be set up to address agricultural and fisheries issues.

Highlights

- Seventy five percent of all CARIFORUM’s imports of agricultural and fisheries products have been excluded from liberalization under the EPA. These sensitive products will continue to be protected by tariffs applied by CARIFORUM states.
- Liberalization commitments have also been back-loaded with only 29% of tariff lines being subject to tariff elimination by the end of year 10.
- There are also special provisions on traditional agricultural exports.
  - Sugar
    - From January 2008 until September 2009, CARIFORUM will be eligible to export an additional 60,000 tonnes of sugar into Europe.
• After September 2009, when the Sugar Protocol expires, CARIFORUM sugar imported into Europe will be free of duty. However, between October 1, 2009 and September 2015 Europe can still impose tariffs on CARIFORUM sugar exports under very special circumstances.

Rice
• CARIFORUM rice exporters will receive increased quotas of 187,000 tonnes for 2008 and 250,000 tonnes for 2009. These quotas will be duty free in contrast to the €65 per tonne duty that would have applied.
• Licensing and other arrangements related to the rice quota will be kept under review to ensure that CARIFORUM rice producers get the maximum benefits from the trading arrangement.
• Duty-free/quota free access for rice from 2010. Under the new arrangement there is no distinction between whole grain and broken rice. This makes it easier for CARIFORUM rice producers to benefit from the higher priced market for whole grain rice.

Bananas
• Duty-free/quota free access from inception of the EPA.
• Joint Declaration on Bananas which commits the EU to assist in funding the CARIFORUM banana industry’s socio-economic adjustments to the changing trading environment.

Commitment to designate contact points to facilitate the channelling and exchange of information regarding technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures as defined in the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.

CHAPTER 6
TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE
This aspect of the EPA is aimed at helping both CARIFORUM and European states to comply with each other’s mandatory standards. At the same time, these provisions help ensure that lack of information about such standards does not unnecessarily impede trade between CARIFORUM and Europe.

Highlights
• Commitment to designate contact points to facilitate the channelling and exchange of information regarding technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures as defined in the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.
• Financial and non-financial development support to assist with the development of: CARIFORUM centres of expertise for the assessment of goods for the purpose of such goods access into the EC market.
• Firms’ capacity to comply with international regulatory requirements.

CHAPTER 7
SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY (SPS) MEASURES
Provisions under this Chapter outline how either CARIFORUM or Europe may use trade restrictions designed to protect risks to humans, animals or plants associated with disease, pests and contaminants. At the same time, these provisions aim to prevent unintended impediments to trade which may come about because of these trade measures. There are also inclusions in this chapter aimed to assist CARIFORUM to comply with European sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and to better develop their own regionally harmonized SPS measures.

Highlights
• Commitment to cooperate in establishing harmonized SPS measures both in the EU and between CARIFORUM States;
• Commitment to establish arrangements to facilitate the recognition of equivalence of specified SPS measures;
• Agreement that in the event that no harmonized SPS measures exist or there is no recognition of equivalence, CARIFORUM and Europe will consult on ways to facilitate trade and reduce unnecessary administrative requirements.
This title contains comprehensive rules and regulatory principles for services and investment including national treatment and most favoured nation treatment. Both sides agreed to cooperate on e-commerce and not to charge customs duties on electronically delivered products. It also contains cooperation provisions to develop and improve the CARIFORUM services sector. Exclusions from coverage are: audio-visual services; maritime cabotage; arms and munitions; some air services, nuclear materials.

CHAPTER 2
COMMERCIAL PRESENCE

The EPA contains the standard rules on investment such as national treatment and MFN but it also includes provisions to safeguard the public interest. It requires that governments take measures to ensure that investors safeguard the environment and maintain high labour and occupational health and safety standards. And governments are bound not to lower standards to attract investment. Furthermore, they are required to take measures that forbid investors from engaging in corruption of public officials to obtain concessions or favours.

CHAPTER 3
CROSS BORDER SUPPLY OF SERVICES

This chapter contains similar rules on national treatment and most favoured nation treatment and addresses the access which CARIFORUM and Europe will provide to each other in services which are traded across their borders.

- The EU liberalized more than 90% of its services sectors and all modes of supply.
- CARIFORUM states scheduled 50-75% of service sectors in order to facilitate investment and the transfer of technology.
- The main new areas of market opening by CF include:
  - Business services
  - Computer and computer related services
  - Research and Development
  - Environmental services
  - Management consultancy
  - Maritime Transport
  - Entertainment
  - Tourism

CHAPTER 4
TEMPORARY PRESENCE OF NATURAL PERSONS FOR BUSINESS PURPOSE

The EPA has clearer rules for the temporary movement of natural persons (mode 4 in GATS jargon) than the WTO because it introduces specific categories of service suppliers that can gain entry into the markets of either Party. (See Table). The EU’s commitments on the Movement of Natural Persons in the EPA are significantly greater than their GATS commitments and conditional services offer in the Doha Round thereby granting better treatment to Caribbean suppliers. As expected, CARIFORUM made significantly less commitments in mode 4 and mainly for intra-corporate transfers.
### Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Person</th>
<th>Main Criteria</th>
<th>Length of Stay Allowed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Key personnel, which includes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business visitors</td>
<td>Persons responsible for setting up a commercial presence and paid by a source outside of the host territory.</td>
<td>90 days per calendar year</td>
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<td>Intra-corporate transfers</td>
<td>Persons employed by a company in the sending country at least a year before entry to the host country to work within a partner company there.</td>
<td>Up to 3 years</td>
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<td>- Managers</td>
<td></td>
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<td>- Specialists</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(ii) Graduate trainees</td>
<td>University graduates, employed by a company for at least a year and entering either Party for career development or training in a branch or parent company.</td>
<td>Up to 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Business services sellers</td>
<td>Persons entering to negotiate a sale or an agreement but who receive remuneration from a source outside of a Party and do not make direct sales.</td>
<td>90 days per year</td>
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<tr>
<td>(iv) Contractual Service Suppliers (CSS).</td>
<td>Professionals with 3 years experience employed by a company in the sending country, which does not have a presence in the other party but has a service contract with a client in the other party.</td>
<td>Up to 6 months per year</td>
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<tr>
<td>(v) Independent Professionals (IP)</td>
<td>Self-employed professionals with 6 years experience and service contract.</td>
<td>Up to 6 months per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Short Term Visitors for Business Purpose</td>
<td>Persons that are not selling services can enter either Party to perform a range of activities such as: Research and design, marketing research, training, trade fairs and exhibitions, sales, purchasing and tourism</td>
<td>Up to 90 days per year</td>
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The EU opened 29 sectors to allow professional employees of CARIFORUM firms referred to as “contractual service suppliers” (CSS) to enter the EU to supply services for up to 6 months in a year. This includes new areas such as entertainment, fashion model, chef de cuisine services, which do not need university degrees. Eleven (11) sectors have been opened up to allow self-employed CARIFORUM professionals to enter the EU to supply services for up to 6 months. There are some restrictions in the newer EU member states but no limits on the number of CSS that may enter the EU. There is also an innovative Protocol on Cultural Cooperation to complement CARIFORUM market access in EU Recreational services markets and to facilitate greater cooperation in the development of cultural industries. It also provides for co-produced audiovisual works to be treated as domestic content in the EU and CARIFORUM.

### CHAPTER 5

**SECTORAL RULES**

A regulatory framework is outlined for key sectors of particular development interest to CARIFORUM and Europe in: Computing services; Courier services; Telecommunications; Financial services and Tourism. The chapter also provides for development support to:

- Develop the capacity of CARIFORUM firms
- Develop sectoral standards and regulatory regimes
- Build human resources within CARIFORUM through training
- Develop equivalence of CARIFORUM skills and Mutual Recognition of qualifications
CARIFORUM and Europe have agreed not to impose restrictions on the free movement of capital related to direct investments. They have the right to implement preventative or precautionary measures for no more than six months in the event that current payments and capital movement cause or threaten to cause difficulties with the operation of monetary policy or exchange rate policy.

These provisions are intended to complement and support the EPA’s economic and sustainable development focus by improvements in areas that affect quality of life and competitiveness.

CHAPTER 1
COMPETITION
These provisions ensure that competition is free from distortion and is fair. By so doing the interest of both consumers and businesses especially small business will be protected. There are rules against anti-competitive business practices such as the abuse of market power and dominance, and a commitment to establish legislation to prevent such practices by firms. There are also provisions allowing the Parties, if they so desire, to cooperate (by sharing information etc) in the investigation of alleged anti-competitive practices.

CHAPTER 2
INNOVATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
The aim is to help create an environment that fosters creativity and innovation within the CARIFORUM States. The creation of new products, marketing techniques and business practices can improve economic growth and development.

The EPA seeks to facilitate the development of CARIFORUM innovation systems to enhance the competitiveness of CARIFORUM firms through technology transfer, research and development, and participation in joint ventures. The intellectual property provisions aim to help create a suitable legislative and administrative environment which will provide protection of intellectual property. CARIFORUM and Europe agreed to adequately implement their obligations under agreements which address intellectual property to which they may be signatory, such as the WTO TRIPS Agreement.

• CARIFORUM LDCs are not obligated to apply the provisions under the Intellectual Property section until 2014;
• There will be support to develop and enforce the protection of intellectual property, including geographical indications and traditional knowledge.
CHAPTER 3
PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The Public Procurement chapter sets out comprehensive rules governing the transparency of procurement activities of the Parties. Obligations address all aspects of the procurement process including the publication of relevant national laws and regulations, publication of procurement notices, as well as equal and timely access by suppliers to relevant documentation and other pertinent information. However, the provisions do not confer rights of access to the procurement markets of the Parties. Governments are therefore free to open or restrict, as the case may be, their public procurement opportunities, in accordance with their own national laws.

CHAPTER 4
ENVIRONMENT

These provisions are designed to assist the prevention of environmental degradation as a result of trade.

Highlights
- Provisions to prevent the degradation of the environment and to foster sustainable development;
- Right of CARIFORUM and Europe to regulate environmental protection in accordance with their own sustainable development priorities but in a manner that does not cause arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination against each other;
- These obligations are subject to dispute settlement procedures only after all stages of a three stage dispute avoidance process have been completed.

CHAPTER 5
SOCIAL ASPECTS

These provisions are indicative of the Parties acknowledgment of the need to pursue trade and the benefits of trade while upholding international labour standards.

- Reaffirmed commitment to ILO labour rights and standards;
- Prevention of the use of labour standards for protectionist trade purposes;
- These provisions are subject to dispute settlement procedures only after all stages of a three stage dispute avoidance process have been completed.

CHAPTER 6
PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

The principles and general rules established under these provisions are intended to establish a legal regime which allows for the personal data of CARIFORUM and EC citizens and residents to be protected during data processing operations.

- Commitment to establish regulatory and legal regimes which are designed to facilitate the collection and processing of personal data especially with regard to services based on data transfer whilst ensuring the protection of privacy of customers and transparency.
- Financial and non-financial support to develop legal and regulatory regimes in CARIFORUM.

Development Funding

Funding for the implementation of the EPA will emanate from a variety of sources. Principal among these are the CARIFORUM Regional Indicative Programme (CRIP), National Indicative Programmes (NIPs), the EU Member States’ Aid for Trade (AfT) contributions and the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). Both the CRIP and NIPs are funded from the EC through the European Development Fund. The 10th CRIP has an allocation of €165 million of which €70 million is reserved for direct EPA implementation. The CRIP is complemented by NIPs – a number of which entail funding supportive of EPA implementation. For example, the €289 million NIP for the Dominican Republic focuses on enhancing competitiveness while that for a major share of the €80 million Jamaican NIP targets trade development. These envelopes of financial assistance to CARIFORUM are additional to current EC funding of the adjustment in major Caribbean industries such as sugar, banana, rum and rice.
Part III – Dispute Avoidance and Settlement

These provisions are designed to avoid and settle disputes that may arise between the EC and its member states and the CARIFORUM states.

CHAPTER 1
ARBTRATION PROCEDURE

• Dispute resolution is facilitated within three tiers
  • Consultation
  • Mediation
  • Arbitration

CHAPTER 2
COMPLIANCE

• In the event that the EC Party is successful in a dispute, sanctions can only be imposed on the individual CARIFORUM State or States which have been found to be in breach of the EPA.

• Europe must exercise restraint in imposing such sanctions and in seeking trade compensation from the CARIFORUM States. There is no corresponding CARIFORUM obligation.

CHAPTER 3
COMMON PROVISIONS

• Dispute settlement provisions of the EPA are without prejudice to any action in the WTO framework, including dispute settlement action;

• Where the EC Party or a CARIFORUM State has started the dispute settlement process with regard to a particular issue under the Dispute settlement proceedings of either the EPA or the WTO, that Party may not start new dispute settlement proceedings in another forum until the first proceeding has been determined.

Part IV – General Exceptions

These provisions stipulate the circumstances in which CARIFORUM or Europe may derogate from the rules under the EPA. Such derogations would only be permitted if they are grounded factually on one or more of several specified matters and do not constitute disguised restrictions on trade or are applied in a discriminatory matter. The EPA does not prevent the implementation of national (or as the may be, regional) measures to protect: public morals; public security, human, plant or animal health and life. The EPA does not prevent the implementation of measures by CARIFORUM or Europe to prevent tax evasion or tax avoidance.

These provisions facilitate the establishment of institutions vested with specific responsibilities essential to ensuring that the objectives of the EPA are met. They are modelled on the structure of Cotonou Institutional Provisions and present a structure of governance with which the CARIFORUM States are familiar. They are as follows:

The Joint CARIFORUM-EC Council:
- Highest institution
- Will meet at Ministerial level at regular intervals not exceeding two years
- Is vested with responsibility to supervise the implementation of the EPA
- May take decisions concerning any aspect of the agreement as jointly agreed by CARIFORUM and the EC.

The CARIFORUM-EC Trade and Development Committee
- Second highest institution
- Assists the Joint CARIFORUM-EC Council
- Vested with specific responsibilities vital to ensuring that all matters affecting the partnership are resolved in an expeditious manner and that the development dimension of the EPA is fulfilled.

The CARIFORUM-EC Parliamentary Committee
- Comprised of representatives from the European Parliament and the legislatures of the CARIFORUM States
- Facilitates meeting and exchange of views of these representatives on the implementation of the EPA

The CARIFORUM-EC Consultative Committee
- Designed for the engagement of civil society in the EPA implementation process.
- Composition to be determined by the Joint CARIFORUM-EC Council

None of these Institutions involve supra-nationality or the ceding of sovereignty of the CARIFORUM States or the EU. Governments on both sides have only jointly agreed to delegate authority on issues relating specifically to the implementation of the EPA to these institutions.
These provisions express final arrangements to be facilitated.

- From the signature of the EPA CARIFORUM states are obliged to extend to each other any advantage that is extended to Europe:
  - With immediate effect between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic on all duties attracting zero rated duty;
  - Within 1 year between More Developed Countries (MDCs) of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic on all other goods;
  - Within 2 years between Less Developed Countries (LDCs) of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic on all other goods;
- Market access and trade as covered in all areas under the Agreement are facilitated between the Outermost Regions of Europe.
- Provides for the possibility of revising the EPA in order to:
  - include the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) associated with the European Community;
  - adjust to the pending expiration of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020;
  - broaden and supplement the scope of the EPA.