

2005: a hot year for EPAs

"To make poverty history, we have to also make EPAs history" - Dr Mukhisa Kituyi, Kenyan Trade Minister, 27 June 2005.

1 March 2006

They made the front page of The Guardian, the Kenyan Trade Minister publicly questioned them and a joint meeting of African Trade Ministers called on the EU to fundamentally re-think its approach.

Discover why 2005 was such a big year for EPAs and why 2006 will be even bigger!

Timeline

March 2005

Following campaigning by Traidcraft and other organisations the UK government announces a shift in its position.

A small step - but a sure sign that our message that EPAs should not be used to force poor countries to liberalise is getting through.

Tony Blair's African Commission Report refers to EPAs as "a serious concern for Africa."

April 2005

Campaigners highlight EPAs as part of the Global Week of Action.

Africa: farmers representatives from 14 African countries deliver a memo to the EC calling for major changes to negotiations.

Brussels: campaigners from across Europe hold a stunt outside the EU headquarters.

May 2005

Leaked letter to The Guardian newspaper reveals that Commissioner Mandelson and the EU are doing everything in their power to push ahead with EPAs in their current form - despite the strong opposition.

Campaigners and traders from North and South respond.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson openly dismisses the huge opposition to EPAs at a meeting of the EU trade committee.

Read the details

- [Leaked letter to Guardian](#) (front page)
- [Traidcraft and NGO letters](#)
- [Guardian online piece](#)
- [Mandelson attacks NGOs](#)
- [Letters from Kinnock and Co-op](#)

June 2005

Meeting of African Union Trade Ministers in Cairo calls for clear changes to the negotiations.

Kenyan Minister, Dr Kituyi, speaks out against EPAs at Traidcraft's EU-Africa conference in June. UK Trade Minister Ian Pearson is among the high profile audience.

UK government appear to be hiding behind the EU and failing to call publicly for changes to the negotiations.

September 2005

Traidcraft publishes hard-hitting report detailing the devastating impact EPAs will reap in Kenya.

UK NGOs publish a joint letter in the Guardian on 27 September, to commemorate the 3rd anniversary of the launch of the negotiations. European Commission responds defensively and calls a press conference.

October 2005

ACP Secretary General John Kaputin declares that EPAs are failing to address the development concerns of poor countries.

November 2005

Parliamentarians from Europe and developing countries issue a joint statement saying the EU must not use EPAs to force poor countries to open their markets

December 2005

European Parliament Committee says the EU's negotiating position is not pro-development.

2006

EPAs are due to be reviewed this year - this is a huge opportunity for our campaign. Traidcraft is working with the Trade Justice Movement and partners around the world to ensure we seize our chance to Stop EPAs.