

## Top EU official undermining African trade

Europe's number two on trade is advising African countries to put up trade barriers to their neighbours, while proclaiming the virtues of regional trade through EPAs.

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Europe's Deputy-Director General for trade, Karl Falkenburg, has been accused of 'creating a rift' in talks on new free trade deals between Europe and Africa.

The European Commission, representing 27 European countries, has repeatedly stated that the needs of poor countries are at the heart of their approach to negotiations. However, Traidcraft has collected plenty of evidence to suggest otherwise, recently published as a report called ["Partnership Under Pressure"](#).

The accusation from an unnamed African diplomat is the latest in a catalogue of examples of Europe putting commercial interests before development, despite their rhetoric.

Both sides agree that developing regional markets is essential to the long-term prospects for defeating poverty in Africa, enabling countries to build strong links with neighbours. Falkenburg suggested that countries in southern Africa put up trade barriers to South Africa and favour imports from Europe instead.

The diplomat was also critical of EU threats to block imports from the region if they do not sign an EPA by the end of the year. " I don't think people in southern Africa appreciate being bullied. We've had all of that rubbish for far too long" he said.

[Read the full story.](#)