

## Economic Partnership Agreements

The EU is currently negotiating a set of trade agreements known as Economic Partnership Agreements. These are free trade agreements, forcing developing countries to open up their markets to EU imports. This would have a devastating effect on local economics as well as regional trade, and lead to disastrous consequences for millions of people.



Negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreement (or EPAs as they are known) were launched in 2002 and some interim EPAs were initialled at the end of 2007.

### What is Traidcraft doing on EPAs?

Traidcraft has been working on EPAs since 2002; campaigning to raise awareness of what they might mean for developing countries and lobbying to make sure they put the needs of poor people first. We're working with partners in the UK and Europe and in poor countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP).

Now that some deals have been initialled we are watching the process of implementation and still calling for the deals to be as development friendly as possible.

For more information on the current state of the EPA negotiations, take a look at our handy [Question and Answer booklet](#).

### Lobbying the UK Government

Traidcraft is lobbying the Department for International Development and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (and previously Department for Trade and Industry) about our concerns over EPAs. We gave evidence to the International Development Select Committee Enquiry into EPAs, and since then have regularly met with both ministers and civil servants to discuss the state of play, and ensure our concerns are listened to.

### Lobbying the EU

We are currently working with other UK NGOs and European networks to provide a co-ordinated voice in the EU. As well as lobbying our own government, we have taken part in Europe-wide lobbying, and targeted the presidents of the EU as that changes every 6 months.

We helped organise a conference hosted by the South Centre in Brussels in 2006, providing a platform for ACP ministers to voice their concerns to the EU.

### Raising awareness in ACP countries

Traidcraft organised a workshop in Arusha, Tanzania, inviting local producers to take part in a seminar discussing what EPAs are, and what affect they will have. This led to some clear messages being sent back to the UK and the EU.

We have held launch events for our research reports, inviting members of the negotiating teams, and other ACP government officials to talk to them about our concerns over EPAs.

We have also supported partners to organise a range of follow up workshops for civil society and for journalists in East Africa, to continue to raise awareness of the affects of these deals.

### Raising awareness in the UK

We've undertaken a number of activities in the UK to raise awareness about EPAs. We held a conference in 2005 where the Kenyan and UK trade ministers both spoke. This was a critical instance of an African minister speaking out strongly against EPAs.

We are also [campaigning](#) actively, and Traidcraft supporters have been sending postcards to the UK government, voicing their concerns about EPAs.

### Want to know more?

We have written some [shorter introductory briefings](#) to help you understand the issues involved. And if you are really keen, have a look at [our reports on this topic](#).