

: Programme

sef: Policy Lunch - ONLINE EDITION

EU-Africa Trade Arrangements at a Crossroads: How to better promote development and intra-African trade

17 November 2020, 12.30-13.30 hrs (CET)

via Zoom

Conference language: English

Supported by

Minister for Federal, European
and International Affairs
of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



#sefLunch

BACKGROUND

The EU is Africa's most important investor and trading partner but, in the sixty years of the post-colonial period, the role of Africa mainly as an exporter of commodities to the EU has remained constant. Unsurprisingly, the EU's trade regulations and underlying incentives are repeatedly subject of criticism.

The termination of the trade-related provisions of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) since 2008, which regulated the EU's trade relations with most African countries, combined with the lack of progress in the negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) has led to further uncertainty. In addition, there are new trade-related challenges, including the ongoing digitalisation of trade and production processes, green growth and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

One key to Africa's economic development is the strengthening of intra-African trade. Great hopes are therefore placed in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is to come into force at the beginning of 2021. It is also considered to be of great importance in overcoming the economic consequences of COVID-19.

But how do the EU's trade policy approaches affect African efforts to deepen trade cooperation and to create regional value chains? From the perspective of African experts, how should the EU adjust its policy in order to promote the continent's independent economic development? And from a European perspective: How does the entry into force of the AfCFTA change the European trade strategy towards Africa?

The sef: Policy Lunch will discuss how the existing trade relations can be made less asymmetric and more viable so that they enable sustainable development and also promote rather than hinder intra-African trade.

12.25 HRS **VIRTUAL “CHECK-IN”**

12.30 HRS **WELCOME MESSAGE**

Hans H. Stein

Director

Representation of the State of

North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU, Brussels

12.35 HRS **INPUT**

Professor Melaku Geboye Desta

Principal Regional Advisor in the Regional Integration
and Trade Division

UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Addis Ababa

12.45 HRS **COMMENTS**

Dr Sandra Bartelt

Deputy Head of Cabinet

Commissioner for International Partnerships,
European Commission, Brussels

Escipión J. Oliveira Gómez

Assistant Secretary General

Departement of Structural Economic Transformation
and Trade, Organisation of African, Caribbean and
Pacific States, Brussels

13.00 HRS **OPEN DEBATE**

Chair

Monika Hoegen

Freelance Moderator and Journalist, Brussels/Cologne

13.30 HRS **END OF EVENT**