The European Commission lies when claiming that the competitiveness of ACP countries would improve if they sign regional EPAs

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According to a source from the European institutions, not yet in the public domain, the European Union (EU)'s offer of tariff reductions on its imports from the United States (USA) in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement (TTIP) would largely nullify the trade preferences of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACPs) on the EU market, supposedly to derive from the signing of regional Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

Indeed the EU tariff offer would eliminate all EU tariffs, except on some agricultural "sensitive" products – for which no offer has been made yet but which would probably lead to tariff quotas before being likely removed in the longer term –, products that ACPs export very little to the EU, on which they face instead large deficits: a good portion of meat and meat preparations, dairy products and cereals. Sugar is also a sensitive product for the EU despite its surplus on ACPs of 107,379 tonnes for €1.063 billion in 2013, but West Africa had a small surplus on the EU of 51,348 tonnes for €28.5 million.

Summary of the EU tariffs' offer on its imports from the USA

	Tariff lines		Average imports 2010-12	
	Number	% of total	€ million	% of total
Total	9376	100%	157.162	100%
Liberalized	9001	96%	156.290	99.4%
Immediately	8438	90%	151.236	96.2%
After 3 years	306	3.3%	3226	2.1%
After 7 years	257	2.7%	1828	1.2%
Other treatment	375	4%	872	0.6%

Thus the EU would eliminate tariffs vis-à-vis the USA on the same agricultural products exported to the EU by ACPs that are not "least developed countries" (LDCs) – Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria in West Africa and Kenya in East Africa (where Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda are LDCs) – and this elimination would occur from the implementation of TTIP (except after 3 years for the vegetables mentioned below and pineapples): for West Africa they are processed products of cocoa and coffee, fish and preparations, pineapples and pineapple juice, and, for East Africa (Kenya), they are also fish and preparations and pineapple juice but mainly cut flowers and fresh vegetables (peas, beans, eggplant, peppers), avocados, preparations of tea and coffee, tobacco, hides and skins. All non-agricultural products from the USA would be liberalized in the EU, including textiles and clothing, that Kenya exports to the EU in a significant quantity and to a smaller extent also Nigeria.

In other words the USA would benefit of the same free access to the EU market than the ACPs if they ratify the regional EPAs despite that US agricultural exports are subsidized, particularly now on agricultural insurances. The scandal is that if the ACPs would not ratify the regional EPAs their non-LDCs will have to pay tariffs of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) on all their exports to the EU – of €150 million for the 3 non-LDCs of West Africa and €61.8 million for Kenya, based on their exports of 2013[1] – and this indefinitely while the same EU exports would be completely tax-free in the EU! Ratify or not regional EPAs, ACPs would be the fall guys, but the LDCs would be even more if regional EPAs were ratified since they would lose tariffs on 80% of their imports from the EU when they would have maintained these tariffs if the regional EPAs would not be ratified.

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[1] *GSP duties Kenya would have to pay on its exports to the EU if the regional EAC EPA is not ratified*, September 2, 2014, http://www.solidarite.asso.fr/Papers-2014; *GSP duties Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria would have to pay on their exports to the EU if the regional EPA is not ratified*, August 16, 2014, same website address.