



CARIFORUM-EU EPA

A Partnership that Counts



The EU commits to new WTO disciplines on domestic regulation

In December 2021 a group of 67 WTO members including the European Union (EU) completed negotiations on new disciplines for domestic regulation which will assist in reducing time and cost to trade in services. The new disciplines are meant to increase transparency, simplify regulatory measures and removal procedural hurdles faced by SMEs in particular who do not have the resources to deal with the complexities of trade. Women entrepreneurs also stand to benefit with the inclusion of provisions on non-discrimination to boost their participation in services trade. According to an OECD study the new disciplines will help to reduce the cost of global services trade by more than USD 150 billion every year.

Although CARIFORUM States did not participate in the negotiations and will not be applying the new disciplines, the countries who participated will apply them to all WTO members including CARIFORUM States. The States may decide to adopt the disciplines in the future.

The EU regards these new disciplines as important to further its renewed trade strategy and for the development of its digital agenda for sectors such as telecommunications, computer services, engineering and commercial banking.

The next step will be for the EU and other countries who completed the negotiations to make specific commitments by the end of 2022 to facilitate trade in services in their markets for example, by simplifying authorisation procedures and ensuring transparency. These new commitments will be included in the EU's GATS Schedule of Commitments.

The adoption and implementation of the new disciplines will hopefully make it easier for service suppliers from CARIFORUM to enter the markets in the EU and contribute to post- covid recovery. It would therefore be important to take note of the new commitments that the EU will be making and to assess whether they make it easier to trade in services in its market.

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