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Letters

Better deals for the EU and Africa, today and tomorrow

Thursday December 13, 2007
[The Guardian](#)

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We welcome signing, expected today, of the reform treaty by the UK government and other EU member states. The treaty will equip the EU with the tools it needs to adapt its institutions to its enlarged membership and to face its future policy challenges. Its reforms will lead to more efficient, effective and democratic decision-making. The permanent presidency for the European council will bring more consistency and coherence to the EU's agenda. The changes to the council's voting procedure, switching to a double majority of member states and population, will be fairer and simpler, also increasing the UK's voting weight by 45%. A single high representative for foreign affairs will help the EU be more forceful and effective in dealing with international external challenges such as energy supply, regional conflict and climate change negotiations.

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The treaty has been subject to many inaccurate and hyperbolic claims. It does not impinge on the UK's permanent seat on the

security council, for example. We hope the much-needed debate on the treaty in the UK concentrates on the facts rather than fiction, and believe it imperative that parliament give its full and proper scrutiny.

Roland Rudd Chairman, Business for New Europe, **Joyce Quin Chair**, all-party group on Europe, **Robert Moreland** Deputy chairman, Conservative Group for Europe, **Mary Creagh MP** Chair, Labour Movement for Europe, **Jonathan Fryer** London Representative, Liberal Democrat European Group and nine more heads of Coalition for Reform Treaty member organisations

I welcome the intervention of Gareth Thomas (Letters, 12 December) and his ministerial counterparts from the Netherlands, Denmark and Ireland, calling on the European commission to ensure that no African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) country is put in a worse situation on January 1 if they cannot sign an economic partnership agreement (EPA) with the EU by the end of the year.

I am though baffled by the fact that only four EU governments are making this call when in 2000 the EU, through the EU-ACP Cotonou partnership agreement, agreed that no ACP country would be left worse off in any trade cooperation agreement with Europe.

I am also obliged to question whether EPAs in their current form can fulfil the promise that they can be tools for development. Many concur that cohesive and planned regional integration in ACP regions will be a key driver of economic development. Yet the EPAs that the European commission is pressuring ACP countries to sign will have an inevitable detrimental impact on regional economic integration, particularly in Africa.

EU leaders will meet tomorrow. This will be the last chance for them to put these negotiations back on track and insist on EU-ACP trade agreements that actually deliver for development.

Glenys Kinnock MEP

Co-president, ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

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