



EUROCHAMTT

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS CHAMBER IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ON THE CARIFORUM – EU ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

16 July 2023

The European Business Chamber in Trinidad and Tobago (EUROCHAMTT) is concerned that Trinidad and Tobago has not yet finalized the process to adhere to the CARIFORUM- EU Economic Partnership Agreement (CARIFORUM-EU EPA). The CARIFORUM-EU EPA is a comprehensive trade and partnership agreement that was negotiated between the CARIFORUM countries and the EU with the objective of contributing to partnerships that would support sustainable development and regional integration among other objectives (<https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/eu-cariforum-economic-partnership-agreement>). It includes articles to facilitate trade in goods and services as well as investment and promotes an enabling business environment. It also seeks to support alignment with international agreements and instruments and good governance practices. Examples of these agreements in the EPA text are those establishing the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and related to sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), technical barriers to trade, Article VII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) addressing valuations by Customs and the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Kyoto Convention on the simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures. Implementation of the EPA is facilitated by development assistance funding from the EU.

The Agreement was **signed in 2008** between the EU and CARIFORUM members countries. It was enacted into local legislation in Trinidad and Tobago in **July 2013** and assented to, and is awaiting proclamation by the President.

In 2008, EU countries immediately removed tariffs on goods originating from CARIFORUM countries entering their markets while CARIFORUM countries including Trinidad and Tobago were **given a period from 2009 to 2033 (25 years)** to gradually reduce tariffs (Article 16:customs duties can be found in Annex 1, 2 and 3 in this document [L_2008289EN.01000101.xml \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:2008289EN.01000101.xml)). Here are example of reducing tariff schedules:

Examples of reducing tariffs taken from the text of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA

HS	Description	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2025	2027	2028	2029	2031	2033
711590	articles of precious metal or of metal clad with precious metal, n.e.s.	15	8	6	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
560750	twine, cordage, ropes and cables, of synthetic fibres, whether or not plaited or braided and whether or not impregnated, coated, covered or sheathed with rubber or plastics (excl. polyethylene and polypropylene)	20	13	11	9	7	7	5	5	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
392350	stoppers, lids, caps and other closures, of plastics	25	18	16	14	12	12	10	10	8	8	6	4	2	0	0	0	0
481151	paper and paperboard, surface-coloured, surface-decorated or printed, coated, impregnated or covered with artificial resins or plastics, in rolls or in square or rectangular sheets, of any size, bleached and weighing > 150 g/m ² (excl. adhesives)	5	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
841221	hydraulic power engines and motors, linear acting "cylinders"	5	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

EUROCHAMTT is aware that while Trinidad and Tobago has not implemented Article 16 – Customs Duties on Imports of Products Originating in the EC Party, the local business community as well as the Government bodies have benefitted from access to technical assistance from the EU under the EPA since 2008 for business improvement, capacity building, and reforms to support implementation of the EPA and most recently, grants to support innovation.

The value of the goods exported by Trinidad and Tobago and entering the EU space with no duties **was €5.6 Billion in 2022** representing 32% of the country's exports. On the other hand, the value of imports into Trinidad and Tobago from the EU in 2022 was **€1.1 Billion**. A detailed analysis of those imports from the EU shows that **consumer items** such as HS code 870323 (motor vehicles), HS code 040221(milk and cream) and HS code 220820(wine) make up 2% and less each of all the imports. The greatest percentage of imports in terms of value are for commercial and industrial usage. That is, **they directly impact the cost of doing business**.

Trinidad and Tobago is now among the **last 5 CARIFORUM countries** (together with Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname) remaining to give notice of ratification (usually signalling full commitment). Barbados, Dominican Republic, Guyana, St. Lucia and most of the smaller islands have ratified the Agreement. See [Agreement - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/press-communication/infographic/2022/04/22/infographic-cariforum-agreement).

Regarding implementation of the tariff cuts, Trinidad and Tobago has not implemented any tariff cut since signing the Agreement. The Government has indicated to the EU that the implementation was dependent on certain administrative steps and/or clarifications on technical errors. CARIFORUM Member States are in various stages of compliance with at least six CARIFORUM Member States (the Bahamas, Belize, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia) having reported the adoption of legislation that implements the entire tariff reduction schedule.

Despite legislation being passed in Parliament and all necessary legal instruments being implemented for the tariff cuts, businesses in Trinidad and Tobago importing from the EU continue to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars more in tariffs. Furthermore, if duties are removed from goods imported from the EU, consumers could benefit from access to quality products at lower prices. This policy of dependency on revenue from tariffs may be considered myopic as it may be stifling potential business growth and investment and partnership opportunities for the local business community. It also denies the consumers greater choice and helps to feed the current inflation.

Latin America and the Caribbean are being seen as important, like-minded partners for the EU to support its climate action goals. The Caribbean countries including Trinidad and Tobago also need to attract good quality, long term investment that leads to sustainable development and goods and services that are globally competitive. This requires an enabling environment that is welcoming to investors. It requires respect for international and bi-lateral agreements and real commitment to speedy and efficient implementation of agreements.

Concrete analysis based on feedback from the business community doing business with Europe, on the impact of reduced tariffs on costs, business expansion and investment can be done within months of implementation and monitored. Failure to progress may result in opportunities for investment being lost. EUROCHAMTT continues to urge the Government to implement Article 16, consider the costs of doing business and to improve the overall environment for much needed investment especially outside of the oil and gas sector.

Top 50 Imports from the EU (27 states) by Trinidad and Tobago

HS Code/ Product	Label	2022 Export value (1000 EUR)	2022 Export qty (1000 Kg)	%
271012	light oils and preparations, of petroleum or bituminous minerals which >= 90% by volume "incl. losses" distil at 210°C "astm d 86 method" (excl. containing biodiesel)	581,275.07	617,632.11	55%
841199	parts of gas turbines, n.e.s.	18,008.69	45.88	2%
740811	wire of refined copper, with a maximum cross-sectional dimension of > 6 mm	15,601.32	1,786.01	1%
200410	potatoes, prepared or preserved otherwise than by vinegar or acetic acid, frozen	15,596.73	16,155.27	1%
150790	soya-bean oil and its fractions, whether or not refined (excl. chemically modified and crude)	14,560.90	8,888.03	1%
040221	milk and cream in solid forms, of a fat content by weight of > 1,5%, unsweetened	13,187.54	3,224.38	1%
870323	motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of <10 persons, incl. station wagons and racing cars, with only spark-ignition internal combustion reciprocating piston engine of a cylinder capacity > 1.500 cm ³ but <= 3.000 cm ³ (excl. vehicles for travelling on snow and other specially designed vehicles of subheading 8703.10)	10,829.20	740.03	1%
730449	tubes, pipes and hollow profiles, seamless, of circular cross-section, of stainless steel, not cold-drawn or cold-rolled "cold-reduced" (excl. line pipe of a kind used for oil or gas pipelines or of a kind used for drilling for oil or gas)	9,215.50	249.05	1%
711590	articles of precious metal or of metal clad with precious metal, n.e.s.	7,816.15	0.14	1%
070190	fresh or chilled potatoes (excl. seed)	7,285.02	20,684.39	1%
870322	motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of <10 persons, incl. station wagons and racing cars, with only spark-ignition internal combustion reciprocating piston engine of a cylinder capacity > 1.000 cm ³ but <= 1.500 cm ³ (excl. vehicles for travelling on snow and other specially designed vehicles of subheading 8703.10)	7,010.82	441.75	1%
220820	spirits obtained by distilling grape wine or grape marc	6,421.10	227.32	1%
560750	twine, cordage, ropes and cables, of synthetic fibres, whether or not plaited or braided and whether or not impregnated, coated, covered or sheathed with rubber or plastics (excl. polyethylene and polypropylene)	5,794.70	1,561.13	1%

HS Code/ Product	Label	2022 Export value (1000 EUR)	2022 Export qty (1000 Kg)	%
381590	reaction initiators, reaction accelerators and catalytic preparations, n.e.s. (excl. rubber accelerators and supported catalysts)	5,345.94	464.74	1%
300490	medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes, put up in measured doses "incl. those for transdermal administration" or in forms or packings for retail sale (excl. containing antibiotics, hormones or steroids used as hormones, alkaloids, provitamins, vitamins, their derivatives or antimalarial active principles)	5,054.11	97.97	0%
110710	malt (excl. roasted)	4,841.07	9,507.60	0%
848190	parts of valves and similar articles for pipes, boiler shells, tanks, vats or the like, n.e.s.	4,811.55	23.26	0%
847989	machines and mechanical appliances, n.e.s.	4,721.27	106.18	0%
690721	ceramic flags and paving, hearth or wall tiles, of a water absorption coefficient by weight <= 0,5 % (excl. refractory, mosaic cubes and finishing ceramics)	4,706.17	9,133.73	0%
230990	preparations of a kind used in animal feeding (excl. dog or cat food put up for retail sale)	4,579.70	2,431.24	0%
392350	stoppers, lids, caps and other closures, of plastics	4,557.65	796.00	0%
721012	flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, of a width of >= 600 mm, hot-rolled or cold-rolled "cold-reduced", tinned, of a thickness of < 0,5 mm	4,449.43	2,409.74	0%
721633	h sections of iron or non-alloy steel, not further worked than hot-rolled, hot-drawn or hot-extruded, of a height >= 80 mm	4,264.82	3,945.47	0%
860900	containers, incl. containers for the transport of fluids, specially designed and equipped for carriage by one or more modes of transport	4,132.12	16.68	0%
842230	machinery for filling, closing, sealing or labelling bottles, cans, boxes, bags or other containers; machinery for capsuling bottles, jars, tubes and similar containers; machinery for aerating beverages	3,652.62	53.42	0%
480524	testliner "recycled liner board", uncoated, in rolls of a width > 36 cm or in square or rectangular sheets with one side > 36 cm and the other side > 15 cm in the unfolded state, weighing <= 150 g/m ²	3,541.98	5,321.35	0%
040210	milk and cream in solid forms, of a fat content by weight of <= 1,5%	3,469.36	995.50	0%
020230	frozen, boneless meat of bovine animals	3,447.92	583.52	0%

HS Code/ Product	Label	2022 Export value (1000 EUR)	2022 Export qty (1000 Kg)	%
711510	catalysts in the form of wire cloth or grill, of platinum	3,442.96	0.05	0%
070310	fresh or chilled onions and shallots	3,343.64	9,446.95	0%
848180	appliances for pipes, boiler shells, tanks, vats or the like (excl. pressure-reducing valves, valves for the control of pneumatic power transmission, check "non-return" valves and safety or relief valves)	3,334.06	117.23	0%
732690	articles of iron or steel, n.e.s. (excl. cast articles or articles of iron or steel wire)	3,297.05	221.03	0%
020329	frozen meat of swine (excl. carcasses and half-carcasses, and hams, shoulders and cuts thereof, with bone in)	3,221.15	1,010.00	0%
840690	parts of steam and other vapour turbines, n.e.s.	3,116.18	5.88	0%
170230	glucose in solid form and glucose syrup, not containing added flavouring or colouring matter and not containing fructose or containing in the dry state, < 20% by weight of fructose	2,705.88	3,200.74	0%
040120	milk and cream of a fat content by weight of > 1% but <= 6%, not concentrated nor containing added sugar or other sweetening matter	2,695.72	3,505.25	0%
220410	sparkling wine of fresh grapes	2,589.12	173.94	0%
853710	boards, cabinets and similar combinations of apparatus for electric control or the distribution of electricity, for a voltage <= 1.000 v	2,545.16	13.74	0%
840999	parts suitable for use solely or principally with compression-ignition internal combustion piston engine "diesel or semi-diesel engine", n.e.s.	2,387.57	56.11	0%
392330	carboys, bottles, flasks and similar articles for the conveyance or packaging of goods, of plastics	2,364.89	890.41	0%
200919	orange juice, unfermented, whether or not containing added sugar or other sweetening matter (excl. containing spirit, frozen, and of a brix value <= 20 at 20°c)	2,308.81	797.04	0%
310520	mineral or chemical fertilisers containing the three fertilising elements nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (excl. those in tablets or similar forms, or in packages with a gross weight of <= 10 kg)	2,290.80	2,233.23	0%
190190	malt extract; food preparations of flour, groats, meal, starch or malt extract, not containing cocoa or containing < 40% by weight of cocoa calculated on a totally defatted basis, n.e.s. and food preparations of milk, cream, butter milk, sour milk, sour cream, whey, yogurt,	2,276.48	961.07	0%

HS Code/ Product	Label	2022 Export value (1000 EUR)	2022 Export qty (1000 Kg)	%
	kephir or similar goods of heading 0401 to 0404, not containing cocoa or containing < 5% by weight of cocoa calculated on a totally defatted basis, n.e.s. (excl. for infant use, put up for retail sale, and mixes and doughs for the preparation of bakers' wares of heading 1905)			
850300	parts suitable for use solely or principally with electric motors and generators, electric generating sets and rotary converters, n.e.s.	2,218.64	18.07	0%
040690	cheese (excl. fresh cheese, incl. whey cheese, curd, processed cheese, blue-veined cheese and other cheese containing veins produced by "penicillium roqueforti", and grated or powdered cheese)	2,185.56	353.58	0%
841391	parts of pumps for liquids, n.e.s.	2,185.33	25.11	0%
481151	paper and paperboard, surface-coloured, surface-decorated or printed, coated, impregnated or covered with artificial resins or plastics, in rolls or in square or rectangular sheets, of any size, bleached and weighing > 150 g/m ² (excl. adhesives)	2,162.51	761.91	0%
210690	food preparations, n.e.s.	2,004.45	322.38	0%
151790	edible mixtures or preparations of animal or vegetable fats or oils and edible fractions of different fats or oils (excl. fats, oils and their fractions, partly or wholly hydrogenated, inter-esterified, re-esterified or elaidinised, whether or not refined, but not further prepared, mixtures of olive oils and their fractions, and solid margarine)	1,981.57	753.17	0%
841370	centrifugal pumps, power-driven (excl. those of subheading 8413.11 and 8413.19, fuel, lubricating or cooling medium pumps for internal combustion piston engine and concrete pumps)	1,954.46	205.95	0%