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The Cotonou Agreement linking the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) countries to the European Union (EU) was in force from 23 June 2000 to 28 February 2020 but has been extended until formal signature by the EU Council of Ministers and the European Parliament in November 2021 and by the ACP Heads of State, for implementation in January 2022.

The Agreement was concluded¹ between the chief negotiators (foreign or trade ministers) in December 2020 and initialled on 15 April 2021 in Samoa by Togo's Foreign Minister, Robert Dussey, for OACPS (Organisation of African, Pacific and Caribbean States) and by Jutta Urpillainen, the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships.

Given the very negative record of the EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements) for ACP countries, already in West Africa (WA) where the interim EPAs (EPAi) of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, implemented since the end of 2016, are destroying the regional integration process², it would be contradictory for the WA Presidents to sign the Samoa Agreement, in particular that of Nigeria, Muhamadou Buhari, who refused to sign the regional EPA. This new agreement is based on a deepening of the EPAs, their extension to the so-called Singapore issues: services, competition, public procurement, intellectual property and investment.

¹ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Finternational-partnerships%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Fnegotiated-agreement-text-initialled-by-eu-oacps-chief-negotiators-20210415_en.pdf&clen=1942332&chunk=true

² Jacques Berthelot, *Did you say FREE trade? The Economic Partnership Agreement European Union-West Africa*, L'Harmattan, September 2018.