



**Successful fourth round of negotiations  
between EU and CA gives further impetus to Association  
Agreement talks.  
Brussels, 14 – 18 July 2008**

After one week of intense negotiations, the European Commission, representing the European Union, and Central America concluded their 4<sup>th</sup> round of talks towards an Association Agreement.

The discussion encompassed the whole spectrum of relations between the two regions, ranging from political dialogue to trade issues, including cooperation.

As expressed in the EU-LAC Lima Summit, the will of both sides to conclude the negotiations in 2009 was reiterated on this occasion.

Further convergence of views could be observed on most political issues at stake, including citizen's security, international justice and sustainable development.

Discussions on cooperation matters allowed both sides to enlarge the scope of already substantial relations, update its content and gear it to upcoming challenges.

This week's discussions took place in the wake of the second exchange of trade offers between the European Union and Central America and allowed for further progress towards concluding an ambitious and comprehensive free trade agreement as part of the Association Agreement.

During this round of negotiations, discussions were launched on the aspects related to the regional dimension of the Association Agreement mainly as regards custom union issues, non-tariff barriers to trade as well as sanitary and phytosanitary issues. Both sides took note of the achievements of the Central American process of regional economic integration in support of this regional approach and indicated that they would maintain in the rounds to come these technical discussions on regional integration issues that are part of this common understanding in view of the conclusion of the Association Agreement.

Building upon intense pre-round preparation and exchanges between the two sides, this week of negotiations was marked by significant progress in every component of the future Association Agreement.

Finally, the Parties acknowledged the importance of the dialogue with civil society.

The next round of negotiations should take place from 6 to 10 October 2008 in Guatemala.

Brussels, 18 July 2008