

*Association Agreement between Central America and the European Union*

**MINUTE**  
**FIFTH MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE**  
**June 20, 2019**  
**Hotel Casa Santo Domingo**  
**Antigua Guatemala, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala**  
**09:00 - 17:00**

**1. Approval of the agenda.**

The parties adopted the proposed agenda.

**2. Follow-up on topics discussed at the 2018 meeting**

**2.1 Update on Matters Related to the Implementation of Article 305 of the Association Agreement:**

**2.1.1 Article 305.2: Regional harmonization**

The European Union requested information on the regional harmonization.

CA informed that, currently, several Regional Technical Regulations are in force and allow recognition of the sanitary registration.

It was also announced that there is a simplified procedure for the recognition of a sanitary registration granted in a Central American country that would be of use in any of the other Central American countries, with the exception of Panama, which extends to products originating in the European Union, in accordance with Article 305 of the Association Agreement.

On the other hand, an update on the progress on Panama's accession to Central America was shared.

**Agreements:**

Central America submitted in writing to the European Union the list of Central American regulations establishing registration and recognition procedures.

**2.1.2 Article 305.3: One-time registration**

There was a discussion regarding how registration will be addressed by families or by product groups. Both the European Union and Central America stated that, for the time being, there has been no request for this type of registration.

**2.1.3 Article 305.4: Central American Technical Regulations**

The European Union consulted on the status of the implementation of Central America's Technical Regulations described in Annex XX of the Agreement. Each of the Regulations described in the Annex was discussed, as well as their implementation in each of the Central American countries.

**Agreements:**

Panama committed to provide written information regarding the status of the adoption of the Central American Technical Regulations of Annex XX.

## **2.2 Adoption of RTCAs (Central American Technical Regulations) by Panama - current situation:**

### **2.2.1 RTCA 67.01.06: 11: alcoholic beverages**

Panama informed that, currently, it is still in a process of internal discussion regarding the adoption of the referred Regulation. In addition, it expressed that it has the will to comply with the commitments derived from the Agreement; to date, imports from the European Union do not encounter obstacles to trade in Panama.

## **3. Proposed topics:**

### **3.1 Update on ongoing amendments to Directive 2009/28/CE on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. Delegated Regulation C (2019) 2055 final supplementing Directive (EU) 2018/2001 in regards to the determination of high risk materials of indirect land use for which there is a significant expansion of land production area with a high carbon stock and certification of biofuels, bio liquids and biomass fuels with low risk of land use change.**

The Guild of Palm Growers of Guatemala made a presentation on the production of palm oil, highlighting the fact that Guatemala is the most competitive country in the world in the production of this product per cultivated area.

On the other hand, the European Union made a brief explanation on the new regulation of renewable energy, including the Directive and the delegated act, focused on palm oil.

Central America asked the European Union to consider the environmental conditions under which palm oil is produced in the region, for the calculation of ILUC, and compare it to production areas in other regions of the world. Likewise, Central America requested the European Union to respond to the comments sent in the public consultation prior to the adoption of the delegated act.

### **Agreements:**

The European Union takes note of the comments above and expresses its availability for the future to provide specific contact points, at the request of Central America.

### **3.2 EU 2019/677 concerning the non-renewal of chlorothalonil.**

Central America expressed concern regarding the notification by the European Union of the non-renewal of authorization for the use of chlorothalonil. It was indicated that chlorothalonil is a substance extensively studied in the framework of the Codex Alimentarius, within which maximum residue limits have been established for its use in the production of different commodities.

Central America also requested clarification as to whether the non-renewal of chlorothalonil implies a change in tolerances for specific products.

Costa Rica sent comments to the European Union notification and is awaiting a response.

The European Union presented the background and rationale for taking such action and informed that it will respond to comments sent to the notification in due time.

**Agreements:**

The European Union will forward the concerns expressed by these countries to the authorities in charge of the matter for their consideration, including clarifications on the possibility of modifying tolerances for specific products.

**3.3 System for the recognition of third country - organic products. Response to the request of Costa Rica on the maintenance of third country status for the accreditation of organic products in relation to the Central American Regulation on organic production.**

The European Union positively recognized Costa Rica's decision to maintain the current rules and in order to avoid affecting the Agreement. It was also commented that in the future only bilateral equivalence agreements in organic products will be possible. In other words, the current unilateral recognition of Costa Rica will have to be reconverted into a reciprocal agreement. As a priority, the European Union will concentrate on renegotiating the current recognition of equivalence and commented that a meeting will take place soon with the competent authorities to move forward in the process. In the meantime, the European Union will complete the evaluation of the Central American Technical Regulation on organic products and will inform Costa Rica about this and the differences with the current recognition.

Nicaragua expressed interest in obtaining recognition as a third country. The European Union indicated that Nicaragua should submit its formal request.

**Agreements:**

The European Union and Costa Rica agreed to maintain dialogue on this issue.

**3.4 Costa Rica: Fire Safety Regulations - Firefighters Regulation 8228.**

The European Union states that regulations on firefighting products need to be analyzed to ensure that they include the European standard or delete any reference to a specific standard. Costa Rica confirms its willingness to continue a technical dialogue to ensure that this regulation complies with the obligations of the Agreement.

**Agreements:**

Costa Rica and the European Union agreed to hold a follow-up videoconference.

### **3.5 TBT Notifications - Status: G/TBT/NI - HND/64, GTMI67, PAN/98, CRI/112, NIC/112, SLV/147.**

The European Union states that comments have been made since October 2018 on several of the notifications made by Central American countries to the TBT and SPS Committee, but has not yet received responses.

Central America states that the public consultation is in process and the analysis of the comments is ongoing.

#### **Agreements:**

Central America will send its response to the European Union's comments as soon as possible.

### **3.6 Central America: projects to promote healthy foods (front labeling)**

The European Union consulted on the existence in Central America of regional and national initiatives on front labeling of food products.

Central America indicated that there is currently no formal initiative for Central American Technical Regulations, nor at the level of each Central American country.

### **3.7 Update on TBT notification G/TBT/NICRI/167.**

The European Union consulted Costa Rica on the response to its enquiries on the regulation of alcoholic beverages.

Costa Rica indicated that the replies were sent and the modification of the Regulation is in force.

#### **Agreements**

Costa Rica will forward the reply to the observations made by the European Union during the notification period.

### **4. Miscellaneous.**

There were none.

### **5. Signature of the minutes of the meeting.**