

The Yaoundé Convention

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The Yaoundé Convention

The negotiations for the renewal of the convention between the Member States of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Associated African States and Madagascar (AASM) culminated on 20 July 1963 in the signing of the Yaoundé Convention (named after the capital of Cameroon), which associated 18 AASM with the EEC. The new convention came into force on 1 June 1964 for a period of five years. There were no significant changes to the trade regime compared with the 1957 association: most of the *acquis* from Part IV of the Treaty of Rome were included. The convention was based on the principle of free trade between the EEC and each of the AASM countries. There were, however, safeguard clauses for the AASM. A second European Development Fund (EDF II) of 730 million units of account was set up and joint institutions (an Association Council, an Association Committee, a Parliamentary Conference and an Arbitration Court) in which the partners were represented on an equal footing were created.¹

On 29 July 1969, the agreement was renewed with the signing of the second Yaoundé Convention. This time the negotiations were more strained. Germany and the Netherlands in particular showed increasingly little interest in the association, especially since they felt that the EEC was paying for France's special relations with its former colonies. The six EEC Member States also had opposing views on the question of cooperation with regard to the most deprived communities in developing countries. While France, Belgium and Italy were in favour of maintaining the regional system, the Dutch and Germans adopted a more globalist stance and recommended granting material or financial assistance to all developing countries. Yaoundé also was also criticised for being neocolonialist, especially by non-associated states.

In 1961, with the United Kingdom's application for accession to the Common Market, the Commonwealth countries began knocking on Europe's door. A first association agreement was signed in 1966 with Nigeria (the Lagos Agreement) but never came into force because of the Nigerian Civil War. An agreement was also signed in Arusha on 24 November 1969 between the EEC and the three East African states of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania; unlike the Lagos Agreement, this did subsequently come into force.

i FRISCH, Dieter. *La politique de développement de l'Union européenne: Un regard personnel sur 50 ans de coopération internationale (Rapport ECDPM 15)* [online]. Maastricht: ECDPM, 2008 (consulted on 18 October 2016). Available at: <http://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/PMR-15-Politique-Developpement-Union-Europeenne-2008.pdf>.