



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

21.11.2008 D 13240

Brussels,  
DG MARE – B4 LM D(2008)

M. António Schiappa Cabral,  
Long Distance RAC  
C/Velázquez 41, 4<sup>o</sup>C. 28001  
Madrid  
Spain

**Subject: Green Paper on the Overseas Countries and Territories**

Dear Mr. Cabral,

Thank you very much for your contribution to the Green Paper on the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) which provides us with useful information on the links between the OCT, and the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries (ACP) where the European fishing industry is concerned.

I have made DG Development, DG Trade and DG Taxation and Customs Union aware of your note as DG DEV recently concluded a public consultation on the future EU-OCT relations, where the rules of origin for the OCTs vis-à-vis the ACPs and the EPAs were specified.

Regarding the specific points to which you refer, no definitive position can be taken by the Commission, however, there is a broad consensus to ensure that cumulation of origin between ACP states and OCTs remains possible. The Commission is also very much concerned about establishing coherence in the rules of origin for all the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) and therefore, adopts a consistent position for all ongoing negotiations whilst also keeping in mind the OCTs' particular situation.

Nevertheless, should the regional approach on the rules of origin in the ongoing EPA negotiations result in different regional protocols, the cumulation of origin for OCTs would only be possible on a regional level. In such a situation, it should be anticipated that a review of the association decision brings about the application of an identical set of rules of origin between a given OCT and a specific EPA region. Moreover, administrative co-operation on origin matters between ACP and OCT should be made fully operational.

To date, as you rightly point out in your letter, OCTs can continue to apply the cumulation of origin with ACP States as laid down in the OCT Decision. Cumulation is assured with the exception of ACP States now benefitting from GSP sourcing materials

in an OCT with the aim of exporting the finished product to the EC applying GSP preferences.

As regards the provisions on fishery products, the objective is to keep the cumulation between OCTs and ACP countries benefitting from the Market Access Regulation as widely as possible.

Possible improvements to the provisions regarding the conditions for fishing vessels in the initialled interim EPAs are envisaged within the framework of the comprehensive EPAs negotiations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fokion Fotiadis', written in a cursive style.

Fokion Fotiadis