

[Your address and postcode]

Dear [name] MEP,

On 14 September the European Parliament will have the opportunity to vote on the European Union Economic Partnership Agreement with Southern Africa (SADC). I urge you to reject this deal as they will weaken local industry through excessive market liberalisation, damage regional trade, and increase poverty and unemployment.

I am particularly concerned by the unacceptable threat by the European Commission to remove preferential market access to middle income countries, including Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland, that fail to take the 'necessary steps towards ratification' by 1 October. I ask you to oppose the delegated acts that remove market access privileges to these countries.

The European Commission insist that EPAs will contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable development, regional integration and good governance; but many governments, trade unions and civil society are concerned they do the exact opposite.

EPAs will decrease tariff income, a crucial source of revenue for many governments. This will reduce the ability of governments to invest in decent public services including education and health, in order to tackle poverty and inequality. They will also undermine government support and protection for domestic industries.

Unlike previous EPAs these latest agreements fail to include a mechanism allowing civil society to contribute to the monitoring of the economic, social and environmental aspects of the EPAs. Such a mechanism should be included and strengthened to ensure that labour standards are enforced.

I urge you to listen to the concerns of people and governments in Southern Africa and reject the EPA, instead calling for trade deals which genuinely champion development, decent work and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]