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ANNEX 8

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to the

Proposal for a Council Decision

on the conclusion of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the West African States, ECOWAS and the UEMOA, of the one part, and the European Union and its Member States, of the other part

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**JOINT DECLARATION REGARDING COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE ESTABLISHED A
CUSTOMS UNION WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The European Union Party underlines the obligation for countries which have established a customs union with the European Union to align their trade regime with that of the European Union and, for some of them, to conclude preferential agreements with the countries that have preferential agreements with the European Union.

In this context, the European Union calls upon the West Africa Party to enter negotiations as soon as possible with the countries which:

- a) have established a customs union with the European Union and
- b) whose products are not covered by the tariff conditions provided for by this Agreement,

with the aim of concluding a bilateral agreement establishing a free-trade area.

The West Africa Party takes note and informs the European Union Party that it will do everything to ensure that the European Union's request regarding the negotiation of free-trade agreements with the countries concerned will be appropriately examined.