



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

**H.E. Karolina Stasiak,
Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Zambia,
presents her credentials as Special Representative to COMESA**

**The European Union and COMESA sign Financing Agreements
for “Trade Competitiveness and Market Access program” (EUR 40 million) and
for “Trade in Services program” (EUR 8.2 million)**

Lusaka, 20 November 2023: H. E. Karolina Stasiak, Special Representative to COMESA, today presented her credentials to H. E. Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe, Secretary General of COMESA.

Accepting her credentials, the Secretary General congratulated Ms Stasiak on her appointment as Special Representative to COMESA. She mentioned that the European Union is COMESA’s biggest development partner and has been the leading supporter of the COMESA’s regional integration efforts. Having invested grant funding of EUR 381 million to date, European Union’s cooperation with COMESA builds on several key pillars, such as supporting regional integration and connectivity, providing technical and financial assistance to enhance trade facilitation, improving customs procedures, and supporting infrastructure development. Actions support the 21 Member States as well as regional cross-border activities.

“As you begin your tenure here in Zambia, rest assured of our co-operation and support in the execution of your duties. We look forward to continuing strengthening our collaboration in advancing our regional integration agenda”. Ms Kapwepwe said.

Ms Stasiak recalled that the European Union and COMESA share similar objectives, to facilitate regional integration, connectivity and trade. She further underlined that *“in view of global challenges we are facing, the European Union calls for making trade fairer and more sustainable. We need to green our economies, make local, regional and global value chains more circular, and significantly reduce the negative impact of our economies on climate.”*

On the same day, COMESA and the European Union signed **two Financing Agreements** which will provide new grants to COMESA with total value of EUR 48.2 million, financed under EU’s Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, Sub Saharan Africa Program for 2021-2027.

The **Trade Competitiveness and Market Access program (EUR 40 million)** will focus on improving the overall trade competitiveness of COMESA member states, while seeking opportunities that come along with global challenges, such as climate change, and making trade more sustainable.

The **Trade in Services program (EUR 8.2 million)** will further contribute to enhancing the overall competitiveness of enterprises, which provide services, including through digital platforms.

The European Union will coordinate closely with COMESA and ensure that both regional programs will not only be implemented most efficiently, but also respond to challenges and opportunities, in order to deliver concrete results and tangible outcomes within COMESA member states.

H.E. Kapwepwe in her remarks emphasized that today's signing of the Financing Agreements is a timely and important step in our cooperation efforts, as it prepares us for a more cohesive approach to our programs.

H.E. Stasiak highlighted particularly the Trade Competitiveness and Market Access program, through which the European Union will support COMESA member states, among others in developing and implementing compliance and due diligence processes, which aim to reduce the CO2 footprint of trade and will make trade with European member states fairer and more sustainable.

Contacts for more information:

Contacts:

Ms Mshuka Kamwela,
EDF Programme Manager,
COMESA Secretariat,
mkamwela@comesa.int;

Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Zambia & COMESA, delegation-zambia@eeas.europa.eu, Political, Press and Information Section Tel. +260 97 125 98 25

