

EAC states to ratify EPA

By EANA Reporter

EAC Partners States will complete ratification of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU) by end of September 2015, according to a senior Kenya official.

Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Amina Mohamed told journalists in Nairobi this follows the initialization of the EPA text by both parties last

month.

"The EPA will offer the EAC member states 30 years of duty free quota free access to 500 million strong EU market," Mohamed said. The EAC-EU trade negotiations have been going on for the past 11 years.

She said that the EAC was the last trading bloc in Africa to sign a deal with the EU. "We learnt from the experience of the other economic blocs and as a result we go the best deal," the

Cabinet Secretary.

European Commissioner of Trade Karel de Gucht said Kenya is only EAC state that will pay import duty to access the EU market as a result of the delay in signing the agreement.

"However, the EU parliament is fast tracking a law that will reintroduce Kenya into the duty free regime," Gucht said. He added that the EPA is geared at supporting regional integration efforts.