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COMESA BUSINESS COUNCIL
Voice of the Private Sector in the Region
BUILDING REGIONAL GOING GLOBAL

BIZNET NEWSLETTER

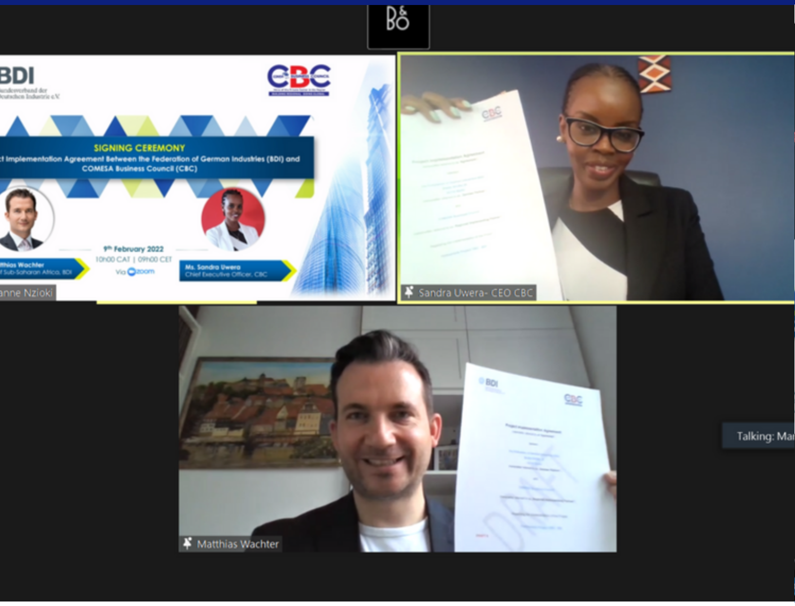
Private Sector Development Highlights from the COMESA Region

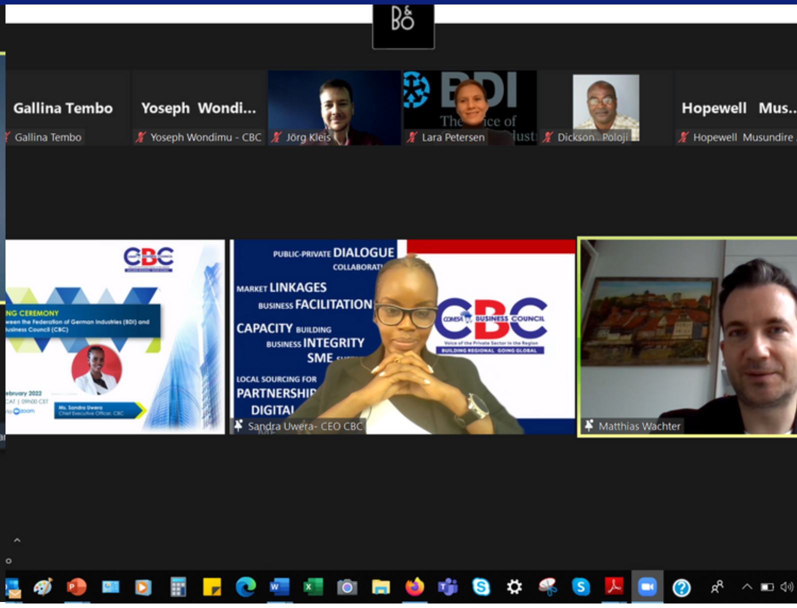
NEWS & FEATURES

Who we Are!!

CBC is the recognized Business Member Organization, established as a private sector institution of COMESA. We represent the interests of businesses sectors at a regional level. The services provided go beyond advocacy, to actively promote business participation in regional integration, investment and global trade. This is done by facilitating the growth of strong business synergies, the development of business opportunities, business alliances, legislative and strategic advocacy. We provide custom tailored services that are driven by both industry and enterprise interests.

COMESA BUSINESS COUNCIL (CBC) AND THE FEDERATION OF GERMAN INDUSTRIES (BDI) FORGE PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE COMESA PRIVATE SECTOR'S PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFCFTA





"Today marks a key milestone in our Germany-Africa business collaborations. We're happy that we have hit the ground running in 2022, and with this partnership, we are looking forward to strengthening our business development activities, increasing our membership, and enhancing the private sector's engagement in pushing forward the implementation of the AfCFTA. Furthermore, we look forward to strengthening the ties between the COMESA private sector and German industries," said Ms. Sandra Uwera, CEO of the COMESA Business Council, during the BDI-CBC Project Implementation Agreement signing ceremony which took place on Wednesday, 9th February, 2022.

The ceremony marked the beginning of the journey towards solidifying the relationship for the period of three years, 2022 to 2024. Expounding on the significance of the partnership, Mr. Matthias Wachter, Head of Sub-Saharan Africa at the Federation of German Industries (BDI) said, "the AfCFTA is a great opportunity for Africa as a whole. We are honoured to partner with CBC and look forward to working very closely over the next three years, towards strengthening the institution's capacity to contribute to the enhancement of intraregional trade, within the regional integration agenda."

With the signing of the partnership agreement, the parties are expected to implement programs to strengthen CBC's business development services, enhance communications and strengthen membership engagement towards business advocacy. The overall long-term objective is to facilitate the inclusive participation of COMESA's Private Sector in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

This partnership further recognizes the far-reaching benefits to be derived from increased cooperation and interaction between German industry and the COMESA private sector, in the areas of knowledge exchange and business linkages opportunities.

TOP OIL PRODUCERS TO MEET AMID RECORD CRUDE PRICES

The world's top oil-producing countries will meet on Wednesday to discuss a further increase in output, while crude prices have reached seven-year highs rattled by geopolitical tensions. Part of their regular meetings since the Covid-19 pandemic shook markets, the 13 members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and their 10 allies convene by videoconference to set output.

Many analysts expect the grouping, including Saudi Arabia and Russia, to decide to continue to boost output by 400,000 barrels per day in March. This will be in line with their strategy to slowly re-open the taps since May last year, after drastic cuts to curb slumping prices when the coronavirus first started spreading. "With that said, we wouldn't completely rule out a larger increase, given high oil prices and recent OPEC underproduction," Capital Economics analysts said. Brent oil on Wednesday surpassed $90 per barrel, attaining a level last seen in October 2014. The price of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude hit its highest level in more than seven years earlier this month, fuelled by easing concerns about the Omicron Covid variant and geopolitical tensions.

Russia Sanctions?

The United States and Britain on Sunday flagged new and "devastating" economic sanctions against Russia, as Washington and its Nato allies step up efforts to deter any invasion of Ukraine. Fears of an imminent invasion have grown in recent days, despite denials from Moscow and pleas from Ukraine's president to avoid stirring "panic" over the massive Russian military build-up on the border.

A Russian invasion of Ukraine would lead to "very hard sanctions" against Moscow, according to Bjarne Schieldrop, analyst at SEB. "It would halt exports of natural gas to Europe even more. Natural gas and power prices in Europe would be much higher than the current extremely high prices we have now," he told AFP. In the Middle East, Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels -- which have frequently targeted Saudi Arabia -- launched two missile attacks on the United Arab Emirates this month. The Emirates has had a major role in the Saudi-led military coalition backing Yemen's internationally recognised government against the Huthis.

Struggling to Meet Targets

Besides the geopolitical uncertainties, analysts have noted that OPEC nations and other key producers are struggling to meet targets to lift output by 400,000 barrels a month, adding to the upward pressure on prices. "OPEC under performance and inaction support elevated oil prices as the group has under delivered against its stated production targets by hundreds of thousands of barrels," Rystad Energy analyst Louise Dickson said.
The grouping "has committed to a passive role in the conversation despite external pressure primarily from the US, to increase production and ease fuel prices," she added. Schieldrop also noted that top producer Saudi Arabia in the last meeting "made it clear that they will not step up production beyond their cap to cover losses by other members. No rescue there."

Read more on: https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business/top-oil-producers-to-meet-as-crude-prices-rise-3700398

IN HOUSE CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CBC STAFF

The COMESA Business Council and the Federation of German Industry(BDI) have partnered to implement a project that will include and enable the private sector's participation in COMESA and be able to contribute to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) implementation. The project further aims at enhancing the operations of CBC by improving its advocacy agenda, institution capacity strengthening as well as enhanced communication and services.

From the above background consultants from BDI are in Zambia and have been having in-house capacity building sessions with the CBC Secretariat staff. The training has set the tone for what will be expected in the four years and will will enhance CBC's communication with it's stakeholders. in addition the training has prepared CBC staff on the project implementation.

UNFAIR CONDUCT AGAINST CONSUMERS BY AIRLINES

Dr. Willard Mwemba – Director and Chief Executive of the COMESA Competition Commission ('the Commission') notes with concern the rising number of complaints on the conduct of Airlines operating in the COMESA Region. The Commission has received several complaints which include:

1. Airlines refusing to reschedule passengers at no additional cost, even after the rescheduling is necessitated by cancellation, diversion, overbooking, or any other circumstance not resulting from the passenger's fault;
2. Failure to compensate passengers for loss/damage of luggage;
3. Long delays in delivery of missing luggage;
4. Failure to refund cancelled tickets in accordance with laid out procedures; and
5. Unexplained delays and cancellations.

The conduct of the Airlines of forcing passengers to comply with unfair terms and conditions is an abuse of their rights, and does not comply with the consumer protection laws of the COMESA Region or with international conventions. The Commission would like to express its disapproval of such conduct, especially during this Covid 19 pandemic period when economic conditions are not favourable for most consumers. It is intolerable that some Airlines should exploit vulnerable passengers and erode them of their economic and financial welfare, in addition to the economic devastation occasioned by the pandemic.

The Commission wishes to advise the Airlines operating within the Region to refrain from such conduct as it is contrary to the COMESA Competition Regulations ('the Regulations). If any such Airlines are found fallible, the Commission will not hesitate to invoke the provisions of the Regulations which include a penalty of up to 10% of the total turnover of the Airline generated in the COMESA Region.

Further, the Commission has since instituted investigations against some Airlines for violation of consumer rights under the Regulations, and the general public shall be informed of the outcome of these investigations in due course.

Therefore passengers in the COMESA Region are advised to be on the lookout for such conduct and report any suspicions to the Commission using the address below, or through any Consumer Protection Agency in their country of residence.

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NEW NTBS ADD MORE BOTTLENECKS AT MALABA, BUSIA

Kenya and Uganda face fresh logistical, bureaucratic and infrastructural challenges that are further obstructing the smooth flow of cargo on the Malaba and Busia borders. This is despite the two countries signing bilateral agreements to ease traffic snarl-ups by trucks that are hindering trade between them. Unilateral bans on products, high fees by Agriculture and Food Authority-Kenya, trade information asymmetry and single lane roads on the Kenya side stifle cross border business between Kenya and Uganda via Malaba and Busia One-Stop Border Posts.

The private sector including the transporters, importers, exporters, cross-border traders, Customs, immigration and other trade facilitation agencies on both sides of Uganda and Kenya, have raised alarm that emergence of new Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) is stifling cross-border trade. This has resulted in the decline of intra-EAC trade from 21 percent in 2015 to 14 percent in 2021 according to the private sector players in the East African Community. "The recent traffic jam at the Malaba border stretched for about 80 km inside Kenya. The reason this happened was due to introduction of new measures related to the control and prevention of Covid-19 by the Ugandan government," said John Kalisa, CEO, East African Business Council. He added, "The decline of intra-EAC trade from 21 percent in 2015 to 14 percent is attributable to NTBs. Future solutions to NTBs should be derived without waiting for ministerial and head of state decisions."

Ministerial Orders

Two weeks ago, Uganda introduced a Covid-19 fee at $30 for truck drivers leading to a strike that paralysed movement of trucks to Uganda for almost a week. These led to a backlog of 4,000 trucks in a traffic queue of more than 80 km on the Kenyan Nairobi-Eldoret-Malaba-Kampala Northern Corridor major highway. It prompted empty and small trucks, including those carrying perishable goods to be diverted to the Lwakhakha-Kenya-Uganda border to ease congestion.

Even then, it took the intervention of Kenya's Transport Minister James Macharia and his Ugandan counterpart of Transport and Works, Minister Katumba Wamala to ease the traffic snarl ups. "The traffic queue has been reduced from 40 km to 25 km. The backlog of 4,000 trucks has been reduced to 2,500 trucks," said Abel Kagumire, Commissioner of Customs, Eastern Region, Uganda Revenue Authority (URA). According to John Changole, Manager of Customs, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) at Malaba OSBP Kenya, 80 percent of cargo destined to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan from the port of Mombasa pass via the Malaba OSBP. "On average the Malaba OSBP clears 1,500 trucks per day. But due to Covid-19 testing requirements, we have been able to clear about 1,000 trucks," said Changole.

NEW NTBS ADD MORE BOTTLENECKS AT MALABA, BUSIA

Introduction of fresh NTBs including Covid-19 measures, fresh cargo inspection as opposed to use of Regional Electronic Cargo and Truck Drivers Systems (RECDTS), failure to make use of the regional bonding system among other challenges continues to slow the flow of goods and services to the border beyond Kenya.
"As EABC we are concerned that the tools that are in place and are supposed to be used in facilitating trade are not being put into use. Like the cargo tracking system is not in use. Why do you bring a scanner and put it far from the border post?' said Kalisa. He called for a borderless East Africa for free flow of cargo. "EAC is under a single Customs territory. In order to decongest our borders, let's fast-track clearance of goods at the port of entry at Mombasa then allow the cargo to move seamlessly without again being subjected to the border checks. Because that is a double check and increases the cost of doing business in the region," said the EABC CEO. EABC also singled out double taxation arguing that once trucks use the port of Mombasa, taxes can be paid upon reaching destination.

"There is the region bond guarantee to cover anything that may happen. Why not use these instruments in decongesting our borders?" posed Kalisa. "In my view trade facilitating agencies of the government are not doing enough to facilitate trade and that causes a problem in terms of the growth of intra-regional trade." Traffic snarl-ups have also been blamed on poor road network and lack of power and internet connectivity at the border points.
Clearly, on the Kenyan side, trucks have difficulty turning and that the two lanes are not sufficient for fast tracking the movement of cargo at the border post. "Inadequate parking area and an incomplete and narrow road delays scanning of goods, a process taking up to 10 to 15 minutes per truck," said Simon Omondi of Kenya Transport Association. "Our roads are narrow. They are not responding to the growth in traffic. "We need to improve the roads network and also the border posts."

Tit-for-tat Bans

Trade wars between Kenya and Uganda that saw unilateral bans on products such as maize, milk and poultry importation by Kenya has contributed to slow movement of goods at the Malaba and Busia borders. Traders decried the impounding of fish from Kenya destined to the DR Congo worth Ksh40 million ($380,000) in October 2021 by Uganda and import ban on eggs and sugar by Kenya. "Covid-19 restrictions on lockdown collapsed businesses for small-scale cross-border traders. We call for the removal of product bans such as sugarcane and eggs as these are commonly traded goods under the EAC Simplified Trade Regime," said Mariam Babu, chairperson of Busia Women Cross-Border Traders – Uganda.

Kenya International Freight and Warehousing Association (Kifwa) are concerned about the safety of truck drivers. "There are no police deployed to protect drivers and cargo despite the long queue of trucks. A vaccination station for drivers, sanitation facilities and other social amenities should be set up for drivers at the border," said Kennedy Osiya, chairperson of Kifwa. Further the storage and parking space for the cargo is wanting at border posts.

Leaders of clearing and forwarding associations want exemption of Customs rent on imported bulk products exceeding 21 days at the port of Mombasa. Traders want a review of the information systems at the border to allow access to information that would enable cross-border traders make sound decisions. "There is a need for more support to modernise the trade information desk to enable traders to access information on currency rates, most selling products for the season such as foods, and information on new regulations among other data," said David Erulu, chairperson of Busia Cross-Border Association, adding that these will allow for smooth trade at the border with Uganda.

Read more: https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business/new-ntbs-add-more-bottlenecks-at-malaba-busia-3698448

CHINA PORT CLOSURES CAUSE PANIC IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN

Partial closure of ports in China as a result of an increase in Covid-19 infections is expected to cause shortage of commodities globally in the next few weeks, with Africa likely to be most affected.China is one of Africa's leading market sources, with data indicating that China-Africa trade reached $185.2 billion between January and September 2021, up 38.2 percent year on year.

China's northeastern city of Dalian reported its first cases of Omicron last week from two travelers, becoming the second major Chinese port to be struck by the highly contagious Covid variant after Tianjin, a port neighbouring Beijing. Some shipping lines have suspended operations as at least three Chinese ports, including Shanghai and Shenzhen, remain partially closed. The shipping companies said they are re-assessing the situation before resuming operations. Ships looking to avoid Covid-induced delays in China are causing growing congestion at the world's biggest container ports.

Disrupted Factory Operations

Shipping lines like AP Moller-Maersk A/S and CMA CGM are skipping the Ningbo port after its closure, according to Simon Heaney, senior manager of container research at Drewry Shipping Consultants. Japan's Toyota and Germany's Volkswagen have both suspended factory output due to partial closure of the Chinese ports. The companies prefer to divert shipments to other ports rather than wait outside Ningbo for an unknown length of time.

Some other ships, however, are waiting at a shared anchorage for the Shanghai and Ningbo ports. With outbreaks now recorded in other ports there's an increased risk of China denying ships berth and with cities like Tianjin on lockdown, truck drivers are unable to haul cargo from factories to ships and vice versa. Supply chain watchers are now increasingly concerned about the flow of goods from the country's factories. The shipping industry has been plagued by recent disruptions, which have driven freight rates to record highs.

About 20 million people in China, most of them in the city of Xi'an in the west and Henan province in the east, are in lockdown as the country tries to contain the Omicron variant of the coronavirus. The Chinese aviation regulator has in recent weeks cancelled more than 60 scheduled flights from the US over Omicron fears.

Read More: https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business/china-port-closures-cause-panic-in-global-supply-chain-3698368

ETHIOPIAN, QATAR AIRLINES TO FLY 25 EXTRA CARGO FLIGHTS

The Kenyan aviation regulator has granted Ethiopian Airlines and Qatar Airways permission to fly cargo directly from Nairobi without making stop-overs at their home bases, coming as a major relief to flower farmers ahead of Valentine's Day period. Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) director-general Gilbert Kibe said they have approved 20 flights for the Ethiopian carrier and five for Qatar Airways.

The Ministry of Transport had last week asked freighters if they objected to the two airlines being granted permits. None objected, paving the way for the approval of their requests. Mr Kibe said the extra direct frequencies, normally referred to as ad-hoc flights in aviation, will run from the end of January to mid of this month.

“Ethiopian and Qatar have been granted extra Ad-hoc cargo flights to meet Valentine’s Day demand,” said Mr Kibe. The move will mostly benefit flower farmers who had requested more capacity at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) to evacuate more produce during the peak season. Astral Aviation, the only local airline operating cargo flights in the country said they have increased their flights from JKIA to Europe by six between Valentines and Mothers’ Day to cater for increased freight demand.

“We have ramped up our capacity to ensure that we meet the capacity needs at the JKIA with three flights on Valentines and three others during Mother’s Day,” said Sanjeev Gadhia, chief executive officer of Astral Aviation.

Read More on: https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/business/ethiopian-qatar-airlines-fly-25-extra-cargo-flights-3702568

VALUE CHAINS FOR A MADE IN AFRICA REVOLUTION

As the world is developing strategies to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, an organ of the African Union, publish the 2021 Futures Report: "Which Value Chains for a Made in Africa Revolution".

The Report generates a first in time analysis of what is shaping up to be concrete opportunities in the AfCFTA. Applying a methodological assessment of the tariff and services offers that have been exchanged amongst AfCFTA State Parties, it identifies 10 Value Chains that constitute some of the areas in which investment decisions could be made - given the emerging contours of the One African Market. Value Chains identified include Automotives; Leather and Leather Products, Cocoa; Soya; Textiles and Apparel; Pharmaceuticals; Vaccine Manufacturing; Lithium - Ion Batteries; Mobile Financial Services; and Cultural and Creative Industries.

With this product, government officials can target which sectors consist of opportunities for their nation's entry into the AfCFTA market, creating targeted trade capacity-building programmes that can strengthen exporter readiness. Businesses are also in a better place to make sound decisions of where to invest to seize AfCFTA opportunities. And those areas where further improvements need to be made are also pointed out - to create stronger chances for a Made in Africa Revolution.

Read More on: Futures Report 2021 | UNDP in Africa

COMESA – GERMANY TRADE RELATIONS

Introduction

Germany is one of COMESA's top export and import trading partner over the past years. According to Trademap, in 2019, Germany was the 6th top export destination for COMESA, consumed US$ 7,5 Billion worth of products from the bloc. The top export products include petroleum oils – crude, Insulated wire, coffee, parts and accessories for tractors, motor vehicles, and parts for machinery. On the other hand, COMESA sourced goods worth US$8.1 billion. The top import products include, motor cars and other motor vehicles, medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products, tractors, insulated "incl. enamelled or anodised" wire, cable, electrical apparatus for switching or protecting electrical circuits, and motor vehicles for the transport of goods.

The charts below highlights COMESA top export and import markets 2019

Chart 1: *COMESA Top Export Markets*

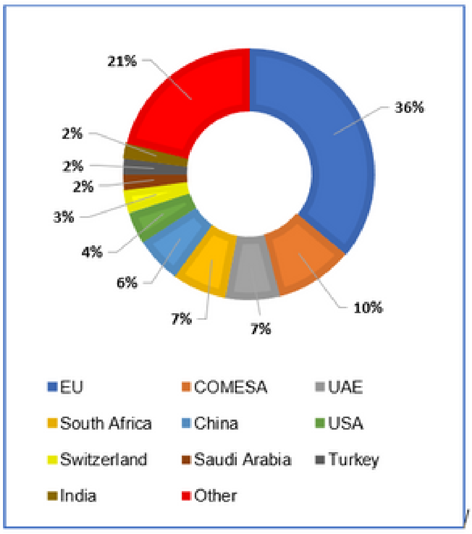
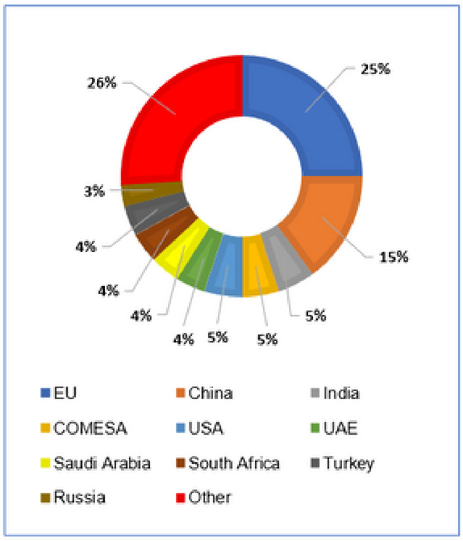


Chart 2: *COMESA Top Import Sources*



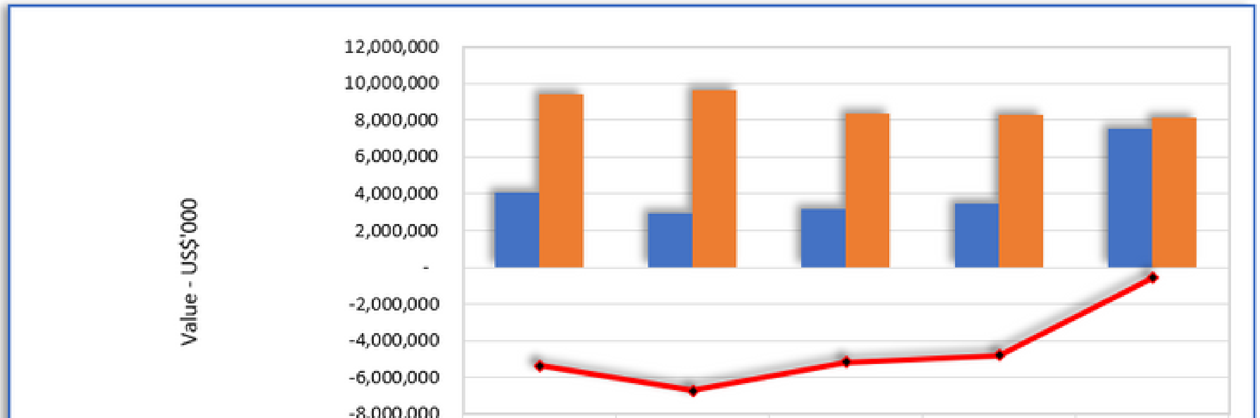
Source: *COMSTAT Database*

2. COMESA-GERMANY TRADE TREND

In 2019, COMESA total trade with Germany amounted to US$ 15,7 billion (exports & imports). Goods exports totaled $7.5 billion; goods imports totaled $8.1 billion. COMESA goods trade deficit with Germany was $586 thousand.

The chart below highlights the bilateral trade trend between COMESA and Germany.

Chart 3: *COMESA-Germany Trade Trend: 2015 – 2019*



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
COMESA exports to Germany US$'000	4,044,458	2,917,120	3,200,118	3,494,119	7,537,859
COMESA imports from Germany US$'000	9,397,603	9,637,411	8,377,341	8,265,716	8,123,652
Trade Balance US$'000	(5,353,145)	(6,720,291)	(5,177,223)	(4,771,597)	(585,793)

Source: *UNCOMTRADE, ITC Trademap*

COMESA – GERMANY TRADE RELATION

3. COMESA TOP EXPORT PRODUCTS TO GERMANY

The top export categories (4-digit HS) in 2019 were: petroleum oils – crude, Insulated wire, coffee, parts and accessories for tractors, motor vehicles, and parts for machinery. Table 1 below shows the top COMESA export products to Germany.

Table 1: *COMESA Top export products to Germany – 2019*

Product label	Value in 2019 US$'000
All products	**7,537,859**
Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude	4,326,911
Insulated wire, cable "incl. coaxial cable"	835,434
Coffee, whether or not roasted	235,690
Men's or boys' suits, ensembles, jackets	223,963
Parts and accessories for tractors, motor vehicles	105,897
Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excluding crude)	99,344
Parts for machinery	84,692
Vanilla	75,315
Footwear	72,530
Jerseys, pullovers, cardigans, waistcoats	65,114
Electrical apparatus for switching or protecting electrical circuits	64,996
Electric motors and generators (excluding generating sets)	63,026
Women's or girls' suits, ensembles, jackets	52,436
Tracksuits, ski suits, swimwear and other garments	42,687
Tricycles, scooters, pedal cars	38,229
Electrical transformers, static converters	36,981

Source: UNCOMTRADE, ITC Trademap

4. COMESA TOP IMPORT PRODUCTS FROM GERMANY

The top import categories (4-digit HS) in 2019 were: Motor cars and other motor vehicles, Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products, Tractors, Insulated "incl. enamelled or anodised" wire, cable, Electrical apparatus for switching or protecting electrical circuits, and Motor vehicles for the transport of goods.
Table 2 below shows the top COMESA import products from Germany .

Table 2: *COMESA Top import products from Germany – 2018*

Product label	Value in 2019 US$'000
All products	**8,123,652**
Motor cars and other motor vehicles	746,232
Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products	521,694
Tractors (other than tractors of heading 8709)	288,554
Insulated "incl. enamelled or anodised" wire, cable	216,356
Electrical apparatus for switching or protecting electrical circuits	181,674
Motor vehicles for the transport of goods	169,026
Instruments and appliances used in medical, surgical, dental or veterinary sciences	146,259
Centrifuges, incl. centrifugal dryers	143,042
Dishwashing machines; machinery for cleaning or drying bottles	141,266
Wheat and meslin	127,240
Electrical transformers, static converters	115,290
Machines and mechanical appliances	104,791
Parts and accessories for tractors	104,538
Milk and cream, concentrated	101,889
Special purpose motor vehicles	94,725
Diagnostic or laboratory reagents on a backing	82,913
Pumps for liquids	80,836
Boards, panels, consoles, desks, cabinets	71,533
Printing machinery	71,148
Tubes, pipes and hoses, and fittings	70,157
Taps, cocks, valves and similar appliances for pipes	70,149
Insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides, herbicides, anti-sprouting products	69,630
Prepared binders for foundry moulds or cores	68,450
Articles of iron or steel	67,690
Articles of plastics	67,444

Source: UNCOMTRADE, ITC Trademap

5. COMESA COUNTRIES EXPORT VALUES TO GERMANY

COUNTRY	Value in 2019 US$'000
Libya, State of	4,386,707
Tunisia	2,117,553
Egypt	1,609,382
Madagascar	213,141
Ethiopia	163,775
Kenya	155,291
Malawi	97,176
Uganda	95,186
Zambia	87,376
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	77,758
Mauritius	62,751
Zimbabwe	47,605
Burundi	15,710
Rwanda	14,133
Sudan	13,923
Comoros	8,192
Eswatini	6,218
Somalia	3,102
Seychelles	2,346
Djibouti	427
Eritrea	127

Source: UNCOMTRADE, ITC Trademap

6. TOP COMESA COUNTRIES SOURCING FROM GERMANY

COUNTRY	Value in 2019 US$'000
Egypt	4,046,493
Tunisia	1,626,000
Libya, State of	484,379
Kenya	392,944
Ethiopia	344,070
Sudan	174,191
Mauritius	161,965
Uganda	122,430
Seychelles	94,374
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	89,672
Zambia	71,365
Rwanda	63,632
Madagascar	58,844
Zimbabwe	36,702
Malawi	34,014
Somalia	30,704
Djibouti	18,741
Burundi	14,965
Eritrea	14,354
Eswatini	9,273
Comoros	920

UPCOMING EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

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2. Business Facilitation Services; Business support services that are regional in nature.

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Influencing policy is at the heart of what we do

2

BUSINESS FACILITATION SERVICES
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