

Title Vademecum on imports of bananas into the European Union

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Abstract

This paper will set out the formal steps to be taken by an exporter seeking to export bananas (and plantain) to the EU market. The paper begins with a quick overview of the prices available for bananas in the EC over the last four years as well as the volumes of trade into the EC and the countries of origin. In addition the introduction gives a brief overview of the EU banana wars and the current status of the ongoing WTO disputes. The body of the paper looks at the formal customs requirements for the import of bananas into the EC including customs duties, VAT duties, customs clearance arrangements and the documentation required. Explanations of key terms are given. The paper then looks at the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements for the imports of fresh fruits including the rules relating to agro-chemical residues. Under the heading of food safety the paper examines the traceability requirements applicable to imports, legal standards applicable to the marketing of bananas and the informal private standards applied by many large retailers and supermarkets. The paper also looks at the requirement for selling bananas as organic. A final section of the paper indicates the names and addresses of the main authorities controlling imports in the principal points of import into the EU. As many exporters might also consider exporting to Switzerland and Norway (not members of the EU), the paper also looks at the main rules applicable in these countries. The VADEMECUM is intended to be a stand alone document containing internet references to the main rules and regulations applicable.