

STOP-EPA march during WSF: Demo Held against EU trade rules

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A big march against the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs) took place during the World Social forum In Nairobi. Below a transcript of the Daily *Nation* on the StopEPA march which appeared in today's issue.

By Nation Reporter.

Thousands of demonstrators yesterday paralysed operations of the European Union office in Nairobi accusing the trading bloc of exploiting African Countries. Officers from Kilimani police station had to be called in to prevent demonstrators, attending the ongoing World Social Forum, storming the offices situated at city's Upper Hill area. The EU head of delegation, Mr. Eric Van der Linden, had a difficult time addressing demonstrators, who shouted him down, threatening to enter the headquarters by force.

Marginalise farmer

The demonstrators were demanding the withdrawal of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), fronted by the 27 member bloc, which they claimed would marginalize farmers in Africa. Chanting anti-EU slogans, the demonstrators said EPAs were being forced on Africa to entrench neo-colonialism. The demand that Africa reciprocate by opening its markets to EU's goods and services, would further destabilise the continent's weak agricultural market, they said. But Mr. Van der Linden said EPAs formed a crucial part in EU's trade and development agenda. "They are first and foremost about promoting regional integration and economic development on the continent".