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TRADE

## **Facing foreign opposition, EU defends banana tariff**

**Bloomberg News**

The European Union defended its planned changes to banana tariffs, saying they're consistent with international trade rules and won't curb Latin American countries' access to the EU market.

A group of six banana exporting nations, led by Ecuador, the globe's biggest banana exporter, and including Colombia, Panama and Costa Rica, asked the WTO this week to rule whether the EU's proposed single 230 euro (\$298) per ton duty is consistent with a 2001 agreement that ended a six-year clash with the U.S. and Latin American growers.

The planned EU tariff, scheduled to be in place by Jan. 1, triples duties on imports from Latin America and imposes none on bananas from former European colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific, or ACP nations, such as Cameroon or the Ivory Coast. The EU is the world's largest banana market.

The WTO will decide by September whether the proposed tariff will reduce Latin America's market share.