



OECS Chief Parliamentary Counsels (CPCs) recently met in Saint Lucia to further clarify mechanisms for implementing the OECS Economic Union Treaty.

Sylva Ambris–Dick, Legislative Drafter at the OECS Secretariat, says that the Bill, which gives effect to the Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the OECS Economic Union, was among three pieces of legislation reviewed by OECS Chief Parliamentary Counsels: “The draft bill which has been under discussion will implement the Treaty into the domestic law of the implementing Member State. Much attention was focused on the ability of the OECS to legislate in eight specific areas (such as monetary policy, trade policy , and civil aviation). This novel development is proposed to assist in enforcing decisions made by the OECS Authority.”

The OECS Legislative Drafter reported that the recent meeting discussed what appears to be a regular topic arising from discussions on the Treaty concerning the delegation of legislative competence. However the CPCs are attempting to make the language of the Bill as precise as possible: ***“It always comes up whenever there are discussions on the Treaty - the issue of the delegation to the Organization in eight areas of legislative competence. I think by now a lot of persons have come to accept that delegation is not a strange a creature as we would have thought of initially. So what we sought to do in this aspect is to make the language of the Bill as precise as possible to ensure that the national states can proceed where they are authorised to do so in the Treaty.”***

Describing the overall discussions as lively, the Legislative Drafter told the OECS Newslink that Chief Parliamentary Counsels also discussed the Procurement and Contract Administration Bill.

She regards this Bill as a piece of legislation that could address some deficiencies "... such as the absence of clear bidding procedures, the need to have procurement planning and the need to strengthen institutional support structures that should add teeth to the entire procurement proceedings. The assistance of the CPCs will lend to the creation of better legislation which will feed into the meeting of OECS Attorneys General and on up to the OECS Authority."-Ambris-Dick

The OECS Chief Parliamentary Counsels also discussed the Competitions Regulations. These Regulations will provide institutional and administrative support to the provisions contained in the Competition Bill. The Competition Bill was drafted due to a requirement under Chapter Eight of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to implement competition policy and law in the Caribbean Community to govern anti-competitive business conduct.

The OECS Secretariat coordinated the Saint Lucia meeting to evaluate the draft enabling legislation for the new Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the OECS Economic Union, the draft Regulations for the OECS Competition Bill and the draft Procurement and Contract Administration Bill. Legal Officer at the OECS Secretariat's Legal Unit, Turkessa Benjamin - Antoine, says OECS Parliamentary Counsels play a critical role in preparing Member States for the establishment of the OECS Economic Union: "The work we have to do is very important as always. Our countries depend on us to determine whether legislation drafted complies with national legislation, our respective constitutions and the general principles of that specialist skill of legislative drafting."

Parliamentary Counsels or Legislative Drafters are specialist attorneys-at-law who assist Parliament in its legislative agenda by, among other things, drafting legislation which, on enactment, become law. This is the second meeting of OECS Chief Parliamentary Counsels regarding the imminent establishment of an OECS Economic Union.

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