Products originating in certain states which are part of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States: amendment of Annex I as regards the exclusion of a number of countries from the list of regions or states which have concluded negotiations

2014/2781(DEA) - 18/09/2014

The European Parliament **rejected a motion for a resolution which intended to object to Commission Delegated Regulation** of 25 July 2014 amending Annex I to Council Regulation (EC) No 1528/2007 applying the arrangements for products originating in certain states which are part of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States provided for in agreements establishing, or leading to the establishment of, Economic Partnership Agreements, as amended by Regulation (EU) No 527/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 as regards the exclusion of a number of countries from the list of regions or states which have concluded negotiations.

The motion for a resolution was tabled by Helmut Scholz, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Dimitrios Papadimoulis and Sofia Sakorafa, on behalf of the GUE/NGL group and Ska Keller, on behalf of the Greens/EFA group.

To recall, the interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and Pacific ACP states was signed by Papua New Guinea in July 2009 and by Fiji in December 2009. Despite the military coup that had overthrown the elected government in 2006 and the fact that there had not been any return to parliamentary democracy, the EPA was approved by the European Parliament in January 2011 and ratified by Papua New Guinea in May 2011.

Following that military coup, the self-proclaimed Government of Fiji notified the EU on 17 July 2014 of its decision to apply the interim EPA.

Regulation (EU) No 527/2013 amended Regulation No 1528/2007 to allow the removal of ACP countries from Annex I to the Market Access Regulation if they do not agree with, and have therefore have not taken the necessary steps towards ratification of, their respective EPAs. Eight ACP countries, including the Republic of the Fiji Islands, were consequently faced with removal from Annex I to the Market Access Regulation as of 1 October 2014.

The Market Access Regulation empowers the Commission to adopt delegated acts with regard to the reinstatement of countries in Annex I to the Regulation. **On 25 July 2014, the Commission adopted a delegated act to reinstate the Republic of the Fiji Islands in Annex I.**

Recalling that the European Union states that it is ‘cautiously optimistic about a prospective return to democracy in Fiji’ and that the current, self-proclaimed military government of Fiji is not legitimated to take any decision with regard to the application and ratification of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement, Members who tabled the motion for resolution stated that the decision of 17 July 2014 should be considered void.

It is for this reason that the motion for resolution calls on the Commission to put on hold any decision that allows for the reinstatement of Fiji in Annex I of the Market Access Regulation as a result of the implementation of the interim EPA until after the announced elections have been successfully conducted in line with international standards.