EU/Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) Partnership Agreement

2023/0464M(NLE) - 10/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 451 votes to 47, with 104 abstentions, a resolution containing a motion for a non-legislative resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, of the other part.

Objectives, principles and terms of cooperation

Parliament strongly welcomed the long-awaited signature of the Samoa Agreement and the overarching objectives it lays out on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and adhering to the Paris Agreement. It recalled the importance of joining forces with ACP countries in a spirit of co-creation and establishing win-win partnerships of equals in the six priority areas of human rights, democracy and governance, peace and security, human and social development, inclusive, sustainable economic growth and development, environmental sustainability and climate change, and migration and mobility. It called for the swift signature and ratification of the agreement by all parties.

The resolution reiterated that the EU is losing influence and visibility to alternative offers made by China and Russia. Therefore, the importance for the EU of reinforcing its status as a reliable ally in development cooperation and of demonstrating that the international rules-based system

can meet current and future challenges is stressed.

The strategic priorities

Parliament believes that the six strategic joint priorities identified in the general part of the agreement remain extremely relevant despite the changing geopolitical context. It stressed the importance of addressing these areas of challenges and opportunities in a joint approach. It reiterated in this context that the EU’s external action in support of democracy must adjust to a new geopolitical reality marked by competing governance models in order to better prevent and respond to democratic backsliding.

The resolution insisted on the need to give greater prominence to the human and social development aspects of the agreement, including to improve access to quality education and vocational training, in order to enable ACP countries to unlock the human capital potential of their young people and to boost human development, economic growth and employment in their countries. There is also a need to improve resources for humanitarian aid and to guarantee effective channels of access to its implementation. The resolution underlined that particular attention should be paid to the provisions on food security and improved nutrition, given the global rise in food insecurity, malnutrition and hunger, which have been particularly exacerbated by Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.

Regarding trade, Parliament insisted that the trade related provisions of the new Partnership Agreement should contribute to stimulating and increasing sustainable investments that deliver benefits for local populations, create jobs, foster private sector development, notably for SMEs, and enhance inclusive economic and sustainable trade cooperation.

The new Agreement also enhances cooperation on peace and security. It has the potential to further cooperation in new areas ranging from piracy or the financing of terrorism, to cybercrime.

Means of cooperation and implementation

Parliament welcomed the budgetisation of the European Development Fund (EDF) in the Union's budget implemented as of 2021, which was a long-standing demand of the European Parliament. It considered that this allows for better democratic scrutiny and for enhanced accountability and visibility of EU development financing. Parliament also recalled that the mobilisation of domestic resources through taxation is one of the most important sources of revenue for financing sustainable development. In this regard, it urged the EU and the OACPS to show strong political will and determination in combating illicit financial flows, tax evasion and corruption.

Parliamentary dimension and multilateralism

The resolution insisted on the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in the strengthening of the political dialogue between the EU and the members of the OACPS. It called for democratic accountability to be ensured at all levels of the agreement. It also recognised the contribution that the OACPS-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) has played in the past and will continue to play in the future. Moreover, Parliament welcomed the setting up of the three regional assemblies that will further strengthen the parliamentary dimension and will allow for in-depth parliamentary debates on issues of a more regional nature.

In addition, Parliament welcomed the commitment to promote a multi-stakeholder approach, enabling the active engagement of a wide variety of actors, including parliaments, local authorities, local civil society, women and young people, and the private sector.

Lastly, the resolution welcomed the provisions on global alliances and international cooperation included in the new agreement, with commitments to the rules-based international order and to promoting international dialogue and seeking multilateral solutions to drive global action forward, promoting peace and development.