EC/ACP agreement: partnership agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific States

2000/0124(AVC) - 13/05/2002

The Council welcomed the Commission's proposal for a mandate to negotiate Economic Partnership Agreements with the ACP countries and regions. It recalled that the objectives of the future trading arrangements with the ACP States under the Cotonou Agreement are smooth and gradual integration of the ACP states into the world economy and the eradication of poverty. In addition, the Council held an orientation debate on the draft negotiating directives, addressing in particular the questions of market access to WTO compatibility and flexibility with a view to the objectives of the Cotonou Agreement. It stresses in particular that the envisaged Economic Partnership Agreements should be regarded as a tool for development and, by the same token, be WTO compatible. Lastly, the Council instructed the Permanent Representatives' Committee to continue its discussion, in the light of this debate and to report back to the Council at its next session with the view of adopting the mandate, bearing in mind that the negotiations will be formally launched on 27 September 2002.