Activities of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly in 1997

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The rapporteur, Carlos ROBLES PIQUER, calls for the Joint Assembly to be institutionally independent, as it is a democratically legitimated body in which the representatives of the ACP states and those of the European Parliament participate on equal terms. He also calls on Parliament to subscribe to the conclusions of the Joint Assembly regarding clilmate change and the need for a comprehensive, consistent and sustainable urban development policy. In this connection, Parliament should draw attention to the need for all development-policy measures to include provision for environmental protection and restoration, in particular prevention of air and water pollution and safe waste disposal, together with the promotion of environmentally acceptable renewable energy sources. He considers it essential to devise appropriate means of anticipating the impact of climate change and the spread of desertification and drought, as well as the threat of environmental catastrophe faced by small island states, developments that will also require changes in lifestyle and an end to resource-squandering in the North. As regards the conflicts and civil wars taking place on the continent of Africa, he welcomes the resolutions adopted by the Joint Assembly. On the other hand, with regard to democracy and human rights, he regrets the fact that the position adopted by the Joint Assembly at the Brussels session concerning the human rights violations perpetrated by the Nigerian Government was not fully sustained by the ACP side at the Lomé session. He deplores the fact that most ACP representatives did not vote for the resolutions on Togo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mr Robles Piquer emphasises that the ACP partners must be made to understand much more clearly that the European Parliament regards democracy and the rule of law as an essential precondition for peaceful coexistence and steady progress in the economic field. In Mr Robles Piquer's view, the choice of venue for the Joint Assembly makes a statement regarding the regime concerned and he therefore calls for the ACP Assembly to take full account of the principles of democracy and constitutional law when deciding on the choice of venue.