ACP/EU relations, Lome IV Convention: human rights, democratisation, article 366 a for consultations

1996/0050(AVC) - 19/05/1998

Respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law are key requirements of the European Union's development cooperation with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. Article 366(a) of the Fourth Lomé Convention (the 1995 version) provides for full or partial suspension of cooperation measures in cases of serious violations of human rights. The procedure implementing this article was discussed at a meeting of the Committee. The committee wanted Parliament to have the right to deliver an opinion on any proposal to suspend or resume cooperation with the ACP countries. A qualified majority is needed in the Council for partial suspension and a unanimous vote for full suspension. On 6th March 1998 the Council announced that there was no legal foundation for the idea of an opinion from Parliament being required. In adopting the report by Magda AELVOET (Greens, B), MEPs have taken up the issue again and called for Parliament to be consulted whenever the Council plans to suspend or resume development cooperation with an ACP country. The committee is calling on Parliament's President to open the conciliation procedure with the Council and to seek active participation from the Commission to advance its case.