Relations with the Overseas countries and Territories OCTs, the ACP and very remote regions

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In various parts of the globe, three categories of territory linked to the EU can be found within a single region: ACP states, overseas countries and territories (OCTs) belonging to EU Member States and "ultraperipheral regions" (UPRs) (i.e. the outermost regions) which form an integral part of the EU. The 1984-89 Lomé Convention called for these three categories, which each have a different status, to cooperate with each other. The report by Blaise ALDO (UFE, F), which has been adopted by the Committee, calls for "strong partnership relations and lively cooperation between the ultraperipheral regions, the OCTs and the ACP States". It urges the Commission and Council to ensure that the ultraperipheral regions and the overseas countries and territories are closely involved" in "regional and subregional political, economic and commercial partnerships which the Union wishes to establish with its partners in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific by 2005". It calls for the Joint Assembly be reorganised so as to involve representatives of neighbouring UPRs and OCTs. It proposes that a forum for EU-OCT political dialogue be established and calls for the establishment of a European Fund for Developing the OCTs (EFDOCT). It calls for regional cooperation between the ACP states, the OCTs and the UPRs to be allocated a separate budget, the funds for which should be drawn from appropriations available under the EDF, ERDF and, where appropriate, the OCTDF. It also calls for the setting-up of regional weather stations and a research fund to prevent natural disasters. Lastly, the committee is in favour of upholding both the current trade arrangements giving products from the OCTs total and unlimited free access, and the rule on ACP/OCT mixed origins, since this does not prejudice the interests of the UPRs.