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

1996/0050(AVC) - 20/01/1999

Under Article 366a of the Lomé Convention, the convention can be suspended, partly or in whole, when serious human rights violations occur in an ACP country. The question is what procedure to follow in such cases. The Committee initially demanded that any proposal to suspend or resume cooperation with an ACP country should require Parliament's assent. The Commission proposed that Parliament merely be informed of any such proposals. In March 1998, the Council said that under the Amsterdam Treaty there was no legal justification for a demand for Parliament's assent. In June 1998, the Development Committee called for Parliament to at least be informed in advance if cooperation were to be suspended or resumed. In adopting the report by Magda AELVOET (Greens, B), the committee decided to try and prevent the worst by approving the procedure proposed, which provides for qualified majority voting in Council; otherwise, unanimous voting would have been used. The Commission indicated orally that it was prepared to inform Parliament in advance of any suspension or resumption of cooperation, as it did in the case of Togo.