

Association of the overseas countries and territories OCTs with the European Community since 1st March 2001

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The committee adopted the report by Jean-Claude FRUTEAU (PES, F) on the association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the European Community. It called for the establishment by 2007 of a development fund specifically for OCTs and separate from the EDF. The rapporteur was critical of the Commission's cautious attitude towards the OCTs, and proposed that, in the context of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the OCTs should take more part in debates and not simply be informed of their outcome. He also called for the OCTs to be given permanent observer status at plenary sessions. The committee also deplored the reduction in the overall budget for regional cooperation and questioned the appropriateness of setting reserve C at an "exaggeratedly high level" (EUR 35m), this reserve being intended to finance humanitarian and emergency aid for all the OCTs and, if necessary, additional support in the event of fluctuations in export earnings. The committee wanted to release additional funds for the development of the OCTs, while adjusting this aid to the special needs of those countries. Lastly, the report criticised the fact that tariff quotas had been imposed in respect of a number of products.