Activities of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly in 2003

2003/2007(INI) - 20/01/2004

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Colette FLESCH (ELDR, L) on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2003. MEPs welcomed the adoption and implementation by the JPA of new Rules of Procedure aimed at rationalising its activities, in particular by setting up three standing committees - the Committee on Political Affairs, the Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade and the Committee on Social affairs and the Environment - thereby contributing to the Assembly's historic development into a genuine parliamentary assembly. The JPA and its component bodies were urged to continue their work on human rights, thereby contributing to the political dialogue provided for in Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. MEPs also wanted to see greater involvement of civil society in the work of the JPA and its Standing Committees. The JPA's report on children's rights, and child soldiers in particular, came in for particular praise, with MEPs pointing out that it had had a considerable impact and had contributed to the adoption by the Council of strategic guidelines on children in armed conflicts. The ACP Member States were urged to take the report's recommendations on board. On Zimbabwe, the committee welcomed the initiative taken by the ACP Co-President and four ACP parliamentarians to travel to Harare (Zimbabwe) to prepare a joint mission and ensure that the Zimbabwean delegation to the JPA no longer includes anyone concerned by the Council's restrictive measures for engaging in activities that seriously undermine democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. It regretted that the Zimbabwean delegation to the 6th session included one person concerned by these restrictive measures, but welcomed the fact that the head of delegation was replaced by a person not covered by the sanctions. The committee thanked the ACP Co-President for ensuring that the latter was the only one to speak at meetings. The JPA Bureau was urged to make practical arrangements for the sending of the joint delegation to Zimbabwe, provided that membership of the delegation was decided freely by the JPA Bureau, and that it would be able to move around freely and meet anyone it wished. Lastly, the report approved the increased cooperation between the JPA and the United Nations and its various bodies, and called on the JPA to continue in this direction.