ACP/EC Lomé Convention: agreement amending the 4th ACP/EC Convention

1996/0023(AVC) - 27/04/1998 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to amend the fourth ACP-EC Convention of Lomé at mid-term. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Decision 98/344/EC concerning the conclusion of the Agreement amending the fourth ACP-EC Convention of Lomé, signed in Mauritius on 4 November 1995. SUBSTANCE: The purpose of the Agreement is to step up the Union's support for the development of the ACP countries (African, Caribbean and Pacific States) by modernising and adjusting the instruments of the Convention, without calling into question the fundamental principles on which ACP-EC cooperation is based, particularly that of partnership. The innovations introduced by the Agreement include: 1) political aspects: bolstering the political and institutional elements in the Convention by: -affirming the principles of democracy and the rule of law, which are regarded as 'essential elements' of the Convention, -the insertion of a clause permitting the total or partial suspension of cooperation in the event of violation of one of these elements, except in special emergencies, -extension of the dialogue between the parties to include political problems; 2) the development of trade: the parties recognise that the development of trade is central to ACP-EC cooperation and that the deterioration in the commercial performance of the ACP countries arising from their uncompetitiveness, the erosion of their preferences and the insufficient diversification of their economies must be remedied. The Agreement also comprises fresh trade concessions for certain agricultural products and renders some of the provisions concerning rules of origin more flexible; 3) financial and technical cooperation: improvements have been made to procedures for implementing financial and technical cooperation, particularly those relating to the programming of the assistance. The aim is, in particular, to make more effective use of the financial resources of the European Development Fund (EDF); 4) the volume of aid: under the 2nd Financial Protocol to the Convention (8th EDF) the Union is to make available to the ACP countries approximately EC 13.3 bn in financial assistance (an uprating of 22% in relation to the previous EDF). Loans from the European Investment Bank's own resources are additional to this, and will bring the Community's total financial assistance to ECU 14 625 million over five years (1995-2000). ENTRY INTO FORCE: 01.06.1998.