

External aid: financial and technical assistance to ACP countries that are signatories to the Sugar Protocol following the reform of the common organisation of the market in sugar CMO

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The committee adopted the report by Bernard LEHIDEUX (ALDE, FR) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure:

- the committee felt that ACP countries that had already taken steps to adapt their sugar industry in anticipation of the EU sugar reform should not be penalised. It therefore introduced a clause stipulating that the multi-annual adaptation strategy "may include measures in the process of being implemented and also current and future financial impacts of social plans already implemented", provided that these measures and plans are clearly in line with the objectives laid down in Article 4 of the regulation;
- ACP countries affected by the reform should redirect current sugar production towards the production of bio-ethanol and other non-food applications of sugar;
- new funding provided to the ACP under the Action Plan must be additional to existing funding resources, but must also complement programmes already in progress in those countries;
- the amount of aid for the ACP countries affected by the reform should be EUR 80 million in 2006, rather than EUR 40 million as proposed by the Commission;
- if the Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument has not entered into force on 1 January 2007, the period of validity of the regulation should be extended until the date of entry into force of that instrument.