

EU/Central American countries: negotiating mandate for an association agreement

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Mr **Willy MEYER PLEITE (GUE/NGL, Spain)** submitted, on behalf of the GUE/NGL group and pursuant to Rule 114(1) of the Rules of Procedure, a proposal for a recommendation on the guidelines for the negotiation of an Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America.

He addressed the following recommendations to the Council:

- § that the negotiating mandate should expressly include the legal base upon which the new Association Agreement is to be negotiated; that base should be Article 310 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, in conjunction with the first sentence of the first paragraph of Article 300(2) and the second paragraph of Article 300(3);
- § that the negotiating guidelines should contain provision for the mechanisms required to ensure that the terms of the future Agreement are in perfect accordance with the EU Treaty mandate, pursuant to which the promotion of international cooperation, the development and consolidation of democracy and constitutional government and the upholding of human rights are basic CFSP objectives;
- § that the negotiating guidelines should include guidance concerning the best way of cooperating closely and jointly in order to promote effective multilateralism and increase the UN's ability to maintain and consolidate peace, and of jointly addressing the threats to peace and security (including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism) within a multilateral framework, as was decided in Vienna;
- § that the negotiating guidelines should provide for progressive access to European markets for Central American products under competitive terms and conditions, so as to prevent the Agreement from aggravating existing asymmetries; that the guidelines should therefore provide for special, variable and flexible treatment as regards the timetable to be established, on the basis of the commitments and the improvements in the competitiveness achieved by the Central American countries as a result of EU support measures such as technology transfer, the inclusion of requirements for home-country content in rules on origin, and the drawing up of cooperation and technical-assistance programmes;
- § that in order to ensure that the inclusion in the Association Agreement of the democracy clause or other social or environmental clauses is more than just an expression of good intentions, the new negotiating directives should refer specifically to the practical means which will enable such clauses to be invoked and should provide in particular for an annual report to be submitted to the European Parliament on the Commission's monitoring activities in this area;
- § that specific references should be included to the structured involvement of civil society in the new political dialogue through the holding of periodic conferences with representatives of civil society in both the EU and Central America, the granting to those representatives of observer status at interministerial meetings and the taking of action to facilitate the representatives' active involvement in appropriate sectoral forums, committees and subcommittees at all stages in the discussion, negotiation and monitoring of the process;

§ that the Commission should provide Parliament with exhaustive (and if necessary confidential) information concerning its recommendations as regards the negotiating mandate.