

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

2006/2222(INI) - 25/01/2007

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Willy MEYER PLEITE (GUE/NGL, ES) containing a recommendation to the Council on the negotiating mandate for an association agreement between the EU and the countries of Central America. The committee stressed the need for the agreement to be "a political and economic partnership with the region and its various countries which takes into account the asymmetry and inequalities between the two regions and amongst the various Central American countries, and which therefore includes key provisions on cooperation, development and social cohesion". The main points of the recommendation were as follows:

- the legal basis on which the new association agreement is to be negotiated should include Article 300(3), second subparagraph (under which the European Parliament must give its assent to the agreement);
- the negotiating mandate should specify that the objective of the Association Agreement includes "the gradual liberalisation of trade in conditions of fairness and mutual benefit based on complementarity and solidarity";
- specific references should be included to "the appropriate structured involvement of civil society in the new political dialogue";
- as in the case of the agreement with the Andean Community (see [INI/2006/2221](#)), a democracy clause must be included in the mandate, together with "mechanisms to safeguard the continuity of the system of employment and environmental incentives under the scheme of generalised preferences" including the GSP Plus scheme, by means of clauses of a social or environmental nature. The mandate should make "express reference" to the practical mechanisms that will enable such clauses to be invoked, and should provide for an annual report to Parliament on the follow-up carried out by the Commission in this area;
- support for regional integration should be included among the aims of the forthcoming mandate for the European Investment Bank's operation in Latin America, so that the EIB's activity effectively complements the new Agreement;
- support should be given to the efforts of the countries of Central America to counter the illegal production of and trade in drugs, for example by helping to market alternative crops introduced by farmers with the help of aid programmes;
- lastly, the mandate should not include "any express or tacit subordination making conclusion of the future EU-Central America Agreement conditional on prior completion of the round of negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO)".