

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

2006/2222(INI) - 15/03/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted 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 report was adopted by 472 votes in favour to 30 against with 75 abstentions. It stated that the agreement must reflect the firm belief that the relationship with Central America implies a political and economic partnership 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 development cooperation and social cohesion and will strive to bring about free trade. 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;
- it should propose specific action for adopting common positions in international fora and at the United Nations in such a way as to achieve a genuine international political consensus between the two regions;
- there should be included specific references in the negotiating guidelines to the appropriate involvement of civil society in the new political dialogue, by proposing the holding of periodic conferences with representatives of civil society in both the EU and Central America;
- include the aims of supporting regional integration among the aims of the forthcoming mandate for the European Investment Bank's operations in Latin America, so that the Bank's activity effectively complements the new agreement;
- the EU must work with the countries of Central America to support their efforts to counter the illegal production and trade in drugs. Part of those activities should involve extending aid programmes to farmers for introducing alternative crops, the marketing of which the EU could help effectively to ensure;
- the guidelines for the Association Agreement mandate, as in the case of the agreement with the Andean Community (see [INI/2006/2221](#)), must ensure the inclusion of the democracy clause and establish mechanisms to safeguard the continuity of the system of employment and environmental incentives under the scheme of generalised preferences (GSP), including the GSP Plus scheme. 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;
- the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America should be based on achieving the MDGs and also on the fight to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, which the EU has set as priorities for cooperation;

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 Organization (WTO).