Activities of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2006

2007/2021(INI) - 21/05/2007

The Development Committee unanimously adopted the own-initiative report drafted by Thierry **CORNILLET** (ALDE, FR) on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2006. In so doing, Members welcome the fact that, in 2006, the Joint Parliamentary Assembly provided a framework for an open, democratic, in-depth dialogue on the negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and the ACP sub-regions and the undertaking (in Bridgetown) by the Commission responsible for development and humanitarian assistance to subject **the national and regional strategy documents for the ACP countries (2008-2013 period) to democratic scrutiny by the parliaments**. However, noting that this commitment had still not been fulfilled, they call on the Commission to honour it as soon as possible and involve the national parliaments of the ACP countries as well as civil society in the programming, the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national strategy documents relating to cooperation between the EU and their country. Similar parliamentary scrutiny is also required in respect of programming under the European Development Fund (EDF).

Welcoming the growing parliamentary nature of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), Members note with satisfaction the fact that the Joint Parliamentary Assembly has decided to concern itself with migration issues (organising, among other things, a workshop during the Vienna session), dispatching a fact-finding and study mission to two countries of arrival - Malta and Spain - in 2006). They encourage the Joint Parliamentary Assembly to continue debating, and to make concrete recommendations.

The JPA’s contribution is also awaited in regard to ways which will foster **development** in the **countries of origin and to action designed to counter trafficking in human beings**.

Political operation of the JPA: although Members welcome the adoption at the Vienna session of a resolution on the situation in the Sudan, they regret the use of voting in separate colleges, which led to the rejection of the resolution on East Africa at the Bridgetown Session, even though a majority of the members of the Assembly supported the resolution. They urge all parties **to avoid recourse to voting in separate colleges**, so as to foster a sense of solidarity and cohesion within the Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

Pan-African dialogue and sounding board for various questions: Members call upon the JPA to continue and to deepen the dialogue with the Pan-African Parliament, with particular reference to peace and security issues. The Joint Parliamentary Assembly is encouraged to discuss the future of ACP-EU cooperation, taking into account the new context surrounding the establishment of the African Union and of the Pan-African Parliament. The ACP-sub-regions and their institutions are called upon to establish dialogue with the European parliament within the institutional framework laid down in the Cotonou Agreement. In addition, the JPA is called upon to strengthen the role of the Committee on Political Affairs so as to make it a genuine forum for the prevention and resolutions of conflicts within the framework of the ACP-EU partnership.

In a similar vein, Members welcome the fact that the JPA plays the role of a sounding board in debates on certain fundamental issues such as those covered at the 11th Session in Vienna. The workshops focused on:

- migration and integration,
- non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,

- public transport in Vienna.

During the 12th Session in Bridgetown, the workshops covered:

- elements of environmental management systems to protect watersheds and coastal ecosystems,
- EU cooperation for the competitiveness of ACP commodities: the case of rum and other ACP products,
- the treatment of HIV/AIDS: identifying, measuring and meeting the costs.

The Members stress that the organisation of meetings at regional or sub-regional level pursuant to the Cotonou Agreement must now actually take place. This is the reason why they call upon the Joint Parliamentary Assembly to schedule meetings of this kind on the basis of the parliamentary structures which already exist within the ACP group.

Lastly, the Development Committee reiterates its support for the JPA's request **that a suitable proportion of EDF appropriations should be used for the political education and training of parliamentarians** and of political, economic and social leaders, in the interests of a sustainable strengthening of good governance, the rule of law, democratic structures in the countries concerned. It considers that these funds should be used for the establishment of public administration colleges and for the political education of members of parliament, local administrators and people in positions of responsibility in ACP political parties and associations.