Basic information

2006/2204(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
EU/Pacific Islands relations: a strategy for a strengthened partnership **Subject** 6.40.06 Relations with ACP countries, conventions and generalities **Geographical area** ACP countries	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
DEVE Development	DEVA Nirj (PPE-DE)	21/03/2006

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH Fisheries	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	06/09/2006

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
General Affairs	2743	2006-07-17

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Development	MICHEL Louis

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
29/05/2006	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2006)0248	Summary
17/07/2006	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
07/09/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/10/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
09/10/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0325/2006	
31/01/2007	Debate in Parliament		
01/02/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0022/2007	Summary
01/02/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
01/02/2007	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2204(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Strategic initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/6/38016

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE376.350	29/06/2006	
Committee draft report		PE376.546	06/07/2006	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE376.621	17/07/2006	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0325/2006	09/10/2006	
Committee opinion	PECH	PE378.625	21/11/2006	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0022/2007	01/02/2007	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2006)0248	29/05/2006	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2006)0642	29/05/2006	

EU/Pacific Islands relations: a strategy for a strengthened partnership

2006/2204(INI) - 01/02/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drawn up by Nirj **DEVA** (EPP-ED, UK) in response to the Commission communication on EU relations with the Pacific Islands - a strategy for a strengthened partnership. (Please see the summary dated 03/10 /2006.)In addition, Parliament recognised the importance of EU financial assistance to encourage the development of local fisheries in the region, which are a major source of revenue for Pacific Island countries, and especially states with lower gross national incomes, such as Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Tuvalu.

Parliament also called for all nuclear tests to be banned, and regarded it as essential that the entire region be made nuclear-free and that the damage to the environment, ecosystems and public health caused by nuclear test be repaired.

EU/Pacific Islands relations: a strategy for a strengthened partnership

2006/2204(INI) - 17/07/2006

The Council adopted a series of conclusions on the cooperation with the Pacific ACP countries in the framework of the ACP/EU Partnership Agreement. It recalls the existing EU agreements with the Pacific and draws attention to the close links with some Member States through the overseas territories of France (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna) and of the United Kingdom (Pitcairn).

The Council reaffirms its commitment to work with the Pacific region to support the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by addressing issues such as governance, stability, regional and economic integration, and environmental vulnerability.

The Council welcomes the Commission Communication on "EU Relations with the Pacific - a Strategy for a Strengthened Partnership" and agrees to focus its attention on the areas set out below:

- strengthening the political relationship between the EU and the Pacific ACP countries, for example through an enhanced dialogue with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF);

- addressing the socio-economic and environmental challenges through more efficient, better coordinated and more focused development cooperation, giving priority to sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources.

The Council confirms that all efforts should be in line with the European Consensus on Development, which defines the objectives and principles of Community development cooperation.

A strengthened political relationship: the Council emphasises its wish to enhance political dialogue on matters of common interest with the Pacific states and region, including democracy, good governance and human rights, peace and security and regional and economic integration. Recognising that democracy and good governance are based on credible, efficient institutions, the EU will lend particular support to good governance and the fight against corruption. The positive roles of parliaments and civil society, especially NGOs, are seen as important in this respect. Promoting and protecting human rights, especially women's and children's rights, and fundamental freedoms, respecting the rule of law and encouraging the growth of pluralistic participatory democracy in the Pacific region are recognised goals and will be advanced as prerequisites for stability and growth. Political cooperation will also include specific assistance for fragile states and for post-conflict reconstruction, in line with the United Nations, and encouragement for further initiatives, such as electoral monitoring and special missions to help resolve political issues.

Regional cooperation and integration: the Council underlines the unique identity and vulnerability of Small Island States and the importance of respecting the special needs of the smaller nations in the region, and highlights the outstanding cultural diversity of the Pacific region. Therefore, regional cooperation shall be further intensified by encouraging the existing regional organisations, in particular the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), to implement the Pacific Plan, and key CROPs (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific), such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, and also by building on synergies and cooperation with the OCTs in the region.

The Council furthermore reiterates the potential of regional economic integration and trade, including cooperation with the OCTs, which is seen as beneficial for all parties. The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) as an instrument for development will be the privileged area of cooperation, fostering smooth and gradual integration of the region into the global economy and promoting sustainable economic development. In this regard, the Council reaffirms its commitment to the timely conclusion of the EPA negotiation to allow it to enter into force by 1 January 2008. The Council underlines the importance of compatibility of the EPA with similar arrangements between the countries of the Pacific

and like-minded partners in the region.

More efficient and focused development cooperation: the Council highlights the need for the EU to enhance its profile in the region, including through strengthening EU representation and contacts between the EU and the Pacific. Given the limited presence of Member States in the Pacific, the Commission's proposal for joint EU action shall be elaborated further, for example the "Europe House" concept. It sees the necessity of supporting the Region to achieve the MDGs as an overall objective, especially the fight against poverty. In this respect special attention should be given to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste, being the three countries with the lowest GDP/capita in the Pacific, and the most disadvantaged and poorest groups of society of the countries in the region.

The Council notes the particular challenges of sound sustainable development in the Pacific and the vulnerability to natural disasters. Willing to support sustainable development in the Pacific, the EU will help countries protect their biodiversity, including dealing with climate change and rising sea levels and addressing diminishing fish-stock and coral bleaching.

The Council also emphasises its readiness to support Pacific countries in land use, land and natural resources management, the fight against land degradation, illegal logging and deforestation, and making ecological and sustainable use of renewable energy resources and the immense ocean and coastal resources, including enhanced pollution and waste management.

The Council recognises the importance of working closely with all other donors active in the region, as well as with multilateral institutions, such as UN organisations, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, in an effort to improve donor coordination and harmonisation and alignment to recipient country systems. In this context, the existing relations with Australia and New Zealand should be further strengthened.

Follow-up : the Council invites all parties to ensure the effective follow-up of these conclusions. The Council will build on existing mechanisms to monitor and review progress on the implementation, in consultation with Pacific Partners. The Commission is asked to report on progress within the scope of Community competence.

EU/Pacific Islands relations: a strategy for a strengthened partnership

2006/2204(INI) - 29/05/2006 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to establish a new strengthened partnership between the EU and the Pacific ACP countries.

CONTEXT: The EU and the Pacific ACP countries (Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu) can look back on more than 30 years of cooperation in the context of the EU-ACP partnership. This long-standing relationship is based on the legacy of a shared history, common values, economic and trade cooperation. However, developments on both sides warrant renewal of this partnership and the establishment of a fully-fledged strategy on the Pacific ACP countries. The purpose of this paper is to propose a strengthened partnership between the two regions, taking into account developments relating to aid policy.

CONTENT: On the EU side, the revised Cotonou Agreement and the European Consensus on Development provide a new basis and impetus for EU-Pacific relations. The Cotonou Agreement strengthens the political dimension of EU-ACP cooperation, allowing an improved political dialogue with partners, while the European Consensus identifies poverty eradication in the context of sustainable development as the core objective. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness adopted in March 2005 reaffirms the commitments to harmonise and align aid policy and sets specific targets for 2010. (Please see INI/2006/2208.) On the Pacific side, the ACP countries are experiencing a number of important challenges in terms of vulnerability, poverty and weak governance At the same time the region is home to substantial natural resources (fish, timber, agricultural produce, oil, gas, minerals). It is therefore proposed to focus on a limited set of specific priorities, where the Pacific has significant needs for which Europe has indisputable comparative advantages. The strengthened partnership should therefore focus on governance, regionalism and sustainable management of natural resources.

Accordingly, the proposed strategy consists of three components:

1) a **strengthened relationship** between the EU and the Pacific ACP countries and region in order to pursue a **broad political dialogue** on matters of common interest ranging from political and security to economic, trade, social, environmental and governance issues, thus enhancing the visibility and political profile of the EU-Pacific partnership on both sides;

2) **more focused development action,** with greater emphasis on regional cooperation to build up critical mass, enhance regional governance and facilitate cross-fertilisation. The main focus will be on matching the key priorities of the region, notably as defined in the Pacific Plan. To recall, the Pacific Plan focuses on the concept of regionalism. Stronger regional cooperation would improve the region's capacity for dealing with the development challenges it faces. The strategy will provide greater support to the Forum Secretariat and other relevant CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) agencies in particular as regards natural resources management, vulnerability and governance. The strategy will reinforce the **Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)** whichis having a catalytic effect on economic cooperation and integration in the Pacific region. In order to maximise the desired effect of the EPA, it is crucial that the negotiations and outcome are closely coordinated with programming and, in due course, implementation of development assistance, at both regional and national levels, in order to harness synergies. Of particular importance are trade-related assistance and capacity-building, socio-economic, financial and tax governance as well as targeted support measures including compliance with international customs standards and trade facilitation where relevant, sugar, the private sector or human resource development and social protection. In addition, the Commission proposed in 2005 to the Pacific ACP countries the establishment of a regional **disaster preparedness** programme. This initiative could be followed up and expanded into the field of disaster reduction (risk reduction, hazard mitigation and reduced vulnerability taking into account the need for adaptation to climate change).

3) **more efficient aid delivery**, including greater use of budget support and closer coordination with other partners, in particular Australia and New Zealand.

Conclusions: the Pacific and the EU have a real opportunity for strengthening the partnership in terms of a broad political dialogue, trade and development cooperation. Since only a few Member States and the Commission have representations in the Pacific ACP countries, the Pacific region would appear particularly well-suited for joint EU presence and action in the field, for instance, through seconding officials from Member States' services to the Commission's regional Delegations in the Pacific, which could also provide facilities on an ad-hoc basis ("Europe House"). A gradual process, combined with the necessary flexibility, would provide a framework for better external representation of the EU in the Pacific, in the form of broader presence, deeper political dialogue and a higher profile for the EU.