On behalf of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) I welcome you to this latest edition of our newsletter. Here you will find an overview of the activities planned for the 26th Session in Addis Ababa as well as a summary of the main topics.

As usual, the Assembly will exercise its scrutiny over the European Commission and the Councils of Ministers of the ACP and EU during the Question Times. There will be a keynote debate on institutional relations between the EU and the African Union and an extended debate on the financing of development aid. Other debates include the green growth economy, the rule of law, pastoralism, the situation in the Great Lakes region and the Comoros archipelago as well as south-south cooperation and female genital mutilation.

I hope you find this edition useful and informative.

Louis Michel (EU Co-President)

26th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
25-27 November 2013, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Cooperation between the African Union and the EU

The keynote debate at the session will cover the important subject of institutional cooperation between the EU and the African Union since the latter has its headquarters in Addis Ababa. Established in 2001, the AU has 54 members and has an institutional structure based on that of the EU. Its declared vision is to strive for “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”. Just like the EU, though, the AU has its own challenges and obstacles to overcome and the debate will shed light on how improvements can be made. The topic is also timely as the next EU-AU summit will be held next spring in Brussels.

Financing of development

In the context of the increasingly uncertain future of the funding of development assistance, there will be an extended debate in three parts, covering the use of natural resources, fiscal reform and the redistribution of wealth, and decentralised cooperation. The subject is also timely in the light of the work of the UN high level panel.
on capital flight from Africa, chaired by Thabo Mbeki, which is currently addressing the same issues.

The Rule of Law

All actors in the field of development would agree that respect for the rule of law is a key condition for this to be achieved. The draft resolution focuses on the role of the judiciary and proposes several tracks to enhance its impartiality and independence. Recommendations include strengthening rules on the separation of powers in the constitution, providing for a status for the opposition, supporting civil society, improving the structure and functioning of the judiciary, effective mechanisms preventing corruption and the promotion of citizenship education.

Pastoralism

The potential of pastoralism is increasingly recognised by the EU and African regional bodies such as ECOWAS, COMESA, and the AU. Around 268 million pastoralists live across Africa and pastoral areas cover almost 40% of the African continent. If properly supported, pastoralists can contribute substantially to the economies, ecosystems, food security, and nutrition of the countries in which they are active. The resolution to be debated will set out recommendations for how this economic activity can be developed.

South-South and triangular cooperation

ACP countries are increasingly adopting approaches involving South-South and triangular cooperation and turning towards emerging economies. The Assembly will discuss the opportunities and challenges involved and the support of emerging countries in the process. Through this form of cooperation partners should obtain tangible development results, by exploring comparative advantages and complementarities and improving transparency with regard to spending and accountability of all actors involved in the process. Traditional donors, such as the EU and its Member States still remain the main providers of aid to ACP countries and continue to be important trading partners.

Other topics

The Assembly will also discuss urgent resolutions on security in the Great Lakes Region and the situation in the Comoros archipelago. There will also be debates on female genital mutilation in the presence of local Baudouin prize-winner Bogaletech Gebre, and an exchange of views with local authorities on the green growth economy in Ethiopia. Members will also participate in two workshops on housing and small enterprise development.

Welcome to the 26th Session of the Assembly. The next edition will provide concise and exciting summary of this important event.