On behalf of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) I welcome you to this latest edition of our newsletter. In it you will find an overview of the activities planned for the 28th Session in Strasbourg (1 to 3 December 2014) as well as a summary of the main topics on the agenda.

The Assembly will, as is customary, perform its role of scrutiny over the European Commission and the ACP and EU Councils of Ministers during the Question Times. The keynote debate this time is entitled “Yes! Africa can live up to its ambitions!” There will also be debates on Migration, Small Island Developing States, and Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The reports from the Standing Committees to be debated cover post-conflict reconciliation, private sector development strategy and malnutrition. The urgent topics, particularly significant at this time, will be on the Ebola outbreak and terrorism in Africa. I do hope that this edition will encourage you to attend the event.

Louis Michel (EU Co-President)

28th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
1 to 3 December 2014, Strasbourg (France)

Yes! Africa can live up to its ambitions

Despite the recent global economic downturn, Africa has experienced unprecedented growth, with an average rate of about 4% in 2013. Africa is endowed with huge mineral deposits including, coal, copper, cobalt, iron ore, oil and gas. Nevertheless the standard image of Africa tends to focus on a continent riven by conflict, disease, malnutrition and corruption.

The keynote debate will focus on how this growth can be harnessed to provide positive outcomes, such as employment creation, productivity gains, income generation and economic and social development that could lift millions of people out of poverty.

The challenge of national reconciliation in post conflict and post crisis countries

The Assembly will consider how action can be taken to promote sustainable reconciliation in countries that went through a period of internal crisis, focussing on the difficulty in finding a fair balance between justice and reconciliation, memory and social peace, and on how every situation is
development in ACP countries and the Investment Facility of the European Investment Bank are important in this regard.

The social and economic consequences of malnutrition in ACP countries
Adequate nutrition is a key factor to live an active and healthy life. In spite of its importance as a determinant of health and development, malnutrition is still a neglected area and too little has been done to address its causes and serious social and economic implications. The World Health Organisation considers that poor nutrition is the single most important threat to the world’s health. The Assembly will adopt recommendations for action by both EU and ACP authorities in order to combat this huge problem.

Virunga National Park
has been a UNESCO heritage site since 1979 - recently its gamekeepers have come under violent attack and the oil reserves contained there are being sought by unscrupulous commercial interests. The debate will highlight these growing problems.

The EU has a special partnership with the ACP countries due to historic ties between them and many EU member states.
This partnership is laid down in the Cotonou agreement. It is vital that this partnership has a parliamentary dimension, allowing for the scrutiny of the governmental and executive dimension.

Therefore parliamentary representatives of the 78 ACP countries and 78 Members of the European Parliament meet twice a year in Joint Parliamentary Assembly, once in the EU country holding the EU Council presidency and once in a country determined by the ACP. Apart from the full plenary sessions there are regular committee and Bureau (presidium) meetings.

If you wish to subscribe to this newsletter, please send an email to acp@europarl.europa.eu

For more information go to the ACP-EU website
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/