“Welcome to the fourth edition of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly newsletter. You will see that the 26th Session was a lively and successful event, with high-level inter-institutional participation and a wide range of subjects and issues debated.”

Louis Michel (EU Co-President)

“We express our deep concern about the breakdown of public order and security in the Central African Republic which is causing a humanitarian disaster and also poses a significant threat to regional security.”

Joyce Laboso (ACP Co-President)

REPORT FROM THE
26th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
25-27 November 2013 in Addis Ababa

Overview

This edition is published after the 26th Session of the Assembly which took place from 25 to 27 November 2013 in Addis Ababa and presents the topics discussed and the resolutions adopted.

The Session opened with a formal sitting with speeches by the Co-Presidents (Patrice Tirolien and Joyce Laboso) and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Ethiopia, and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. The Assembly held its customary Question Time with the European Commission (Commissioner Piebalgs) and the Presidents-in-office of the EU and ACP Council. The main geo-political focus this time was on security in the Great Lakes region. Other issues debated included the Committee reports
on the rule of law, on South-South and triangular cooperation and on pastoralism, as well as relations between the EU and the African Union, female genital mutilation and the green growth economy in Ethiopia. There was an extended debate without resolution on financing development aid, focusing in particular on the use of natural resources, fiscal reforms and redistribution of wealth and decentralised cooperation. The situation in the Comoros Archipelago was debated, but the urgent resolution failed to obtain adequate support in the final vote, so was not adopted.

Geopolitical debate

Democratic Republic of Congo
On its urgency resolution on security in the Great Lakes region, the Assembly welcomed the recent military developments in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), notably the military defeat of the M23 rebel movement by the DRC army and the MONUSCO intervention brigade. The resolution however stressed that there can be no purely military solution to the situation in the DRC and, whilst welcoming the announcement by the M23 rebel group to give up its arms called for a swift conclusion to the Kampala negotiations.

The Assembly noted its concern over the humanitarian situation in the country, characterised by grave human rights abuses, violence against women, millions of internal displaced persons and refugees and called for the international community to continue to provide substantial, coordinated and more effective aid to the people affected by the atrocities of war.

The ACP-EU JPA stressed the need for the DRC government to embark on a process of political and institutional reform, notably a comprehensive reform of the security sector and stepping up the fight against impunity, and for the international community to remain engaged in support of these reforms. The resolution noted the importance of the Framework Agreement, signed in February 2013 by eleven African countries, in providing a long term solution to the security situation in the Great Lakes region and called on the UN Security Council to take appropriate action against those failing to meet their commitments.

Committee reports

The Rule of Law
The resolution adopted on the Rule of Law and an impartial and independent judiciary calls for a clear separation of powers, pluralistic media and stronger human resources for the judiciary in order to guarantee proper access to justice in a true democracy. It stresses the consequences of non-respect of the rule of law in terms of corruption, lack of investments and decline of the economy. The Assembly also insists on the need for an independent appointment procedure and disciplinary system for judges and prosecutors. It highlights that a competent judiciary that provides effective protection against corruption and patronage is the result of a long-term process requiring systematic civic education at the earliest age. This could be facilitated by an exchange of good practices amongst ACP countries, taking into account similar local situations and a sustained effort on building capacity.
Pastoralism
The resolution on the impact of pastoralism in ACP countries calls for the conservation of this traditional activity which contributes enormously to the economic, environmental and food security aspects of life in Africa. The Assembly also calls for reinforcing knowledge in animal health, protection of the environment and the securing of natural resources. Members also stressed the fundamental role of pastoralism as a way of life and its association with cultural and traditional values going back hundreds of years.

South-South and triangular cooperation
The resolution on South-South and triangular cooperation calls for a balanced relationship with emerging countries to enhance technical know-how in ACP countries and not to allow for the mere transfer of raw materials with no return, as is often the case with China. There should be increased transparency and a stronger involvement of countries from the south in this important form of cooperation, in which research and innovation should also play a pivotal role. The Assembly also states that the ACP countries must be able to address environmental challenges and commends the EU Member States for their efforts to gradually phase out fossil fuels in line with the Union’s international commitments to fight climate change.

Other debates
Millennium Development Goals
The usual debate with Commissioner Piebalgs focused on the results of the Review Summit on the MDGs held in September in New York and the future of the development agenda after 2015. Commissioner Piebalgs took stock of progress made in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and how the post-MDG agenda should be reflected in the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. He emphasized that a new set of development goals is needed and should require a renewed global contract involving government, citizens, civil society and the private sector. The Commissioner made it clear that the European Union remained as committed as ever to doing everything possible to make the MDGs a reality by 2015.

Relations between the European Union and the African Union
There were also debates on relations between the European Union and the African Union, which has its headquarters in Addis Ababa, in which members stressed the need for more effectiveness in the work of the AU institutions and referred to the EU-Africa Summit as a possible new start with different focuses. In the extended debate on the funding of
development aid members called for better yields from natural resources, fiscal reforms and decentralised cooperation to improve development in ACP countries. In this context, Members called for parliaments to hold governments accountable in order to maximise the revenues obtained from the extraction of natural resources for the benefit of their citizens. Moreover, Members stressed the importance of increasing transparency and promoting good governance in order to combat corruption, tax evasion and other forms of illicit financial outflows.

**Debate on female genital mutilation**
There was also a lively debate with Bogalech Gebre, winner of the King Baudouin Prize for development and the Jean Rey Prize, on the subject of female genital mutilation, against which she has successfully campaigned in her native Ethiopia.

**Adopted declarations**
The Co-Presidents issued declarations on the Central African Republic, Madagascar, the WTO Ministerial Conference and the Lampedusa Tragedy.

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**Useful links**

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**Further information**

ACP-EU website:
www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp