ACP-EU – JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 29 November 2012

Overview of the 24th ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

Press Release on adopted resolutions

Crises in Congo and Mali: ACP MPs and MEPs call for stable regional solutions

The crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Somalia cannot be ended without structural solutions involving neighbouring countries, said ACP members of parliament and MEPs in resolutions adopted at the 24th ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) in Paramaribo, Suriname.

The JPA also launched a debate on the future of the ACP-EU partnership, based on the Cotonou Agreement, which expires in 2020, and spoke about the situation in Cuba. Other resolutions adopted concerned giving impetus to ICT, access to energy and the fight against elephant poaching.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The JPA strongly condemned the attacks by M23 and other rebel groups in eastern Congo. MEPs and MPs from ACP countries called on the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighbouring countries to take the necessary steps to achieve a lasting solution and end impunity for human rights violations.

The international community should improve its aid to the people in eastern DRC, while the UN Stabilisation Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) should become more effective in protecting Congolese civilians. The JPA also called for transparent control over the DRC natural resources and equitable distribution of their revenue to its population. The EU should help the DRC to increase the authority of the state and the rule of law and to reform the armed forces. The EU military mission (EUSEC) and police assistance mission (EUPOL) should be continued.

Urgent motion for resolution adopted unanimously

Mali: Algeria to play an active role

The violence perpetrated by armed groups in the north of Mali and the proclamation by the Mali National Liberation Army of the independent state of Azawad against the will of two thirds of the population were strongly condemned by ACP MPs and MEPs. The claimed independence is null and void, they said, and the atrocities committed should be considered war crimes. The JPA demanded the re-establishment of Mali's territorial integrity and called for the clear involvement of the Algerian government.

The UN Security Council should act as soon as possible on the call by the Malian transitional authorities for an international force to help regain control over northern Mali. The EU and the UN should give active support to the efforts by ECOWAS (Economic Community Of West African States) to restore peace.

Urgent motion for resolution adopted by show of hands.

Somalia

The crisis and piracy in Somalia cannot be solved by military means alone, said the JPA. Somalia and its institutions must be supported in the transition towards democracy, peace and reconciliation involving all parties concerned. With help from the EU, the neighbouring states should play a positive role in solving the crisis.

Although the fight against terrorism should be a priority, strong support should be given to state capacity building, especially as 70% of state revenue is diverted. The JPA criticized Somalia's food exports as it fails to guarantee food security for its own population. The EU is Somalia's largest donor, with more than one billion euro in aid between 2008 and 2013.

The motion for a resolution, drafted by Véronique De Keyser (S&D, BE) and Ali Soubaneh (Djibouti), was adopted by show of hands.

More decentralised access to energy

The JPA called for more decentralisation to deliver more and cleaner energy to people who now go without electricity or rely on burning biomass. An estimated 1.3 billion people currently have no electricity and another 3 billion rely on burning biomass, which is detrimental to health.

ACP countries should consider universal access to energy as a development priority. They should aim for a mix of large and small projects and redesign fossil fuel subsidies to focus more on renewable fuels. The EU has already provided more than 1 billion euro over the last 10 years to increase access to energy in the developing countries and the JPA called on the European Commission and ACP partners to monitor the progress achieved with this funding.

The motion for a resolution drafted by Manuel Jimenez (Dominican Republic) and Horst Schnellhart (EPP, DE) was adopted by show of hands

Digital divide in ACP countries: free the energies

As access to information is critical for empowerment and knowledge, the digital divide between developed and developing countries in terms of access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be bridged. ICT is a fundamental tool to promote democracy, peace and development, the JPA underlined.

ACP countries should create more transparent and more predictable frameworks to attract investors and ensure data protection. Parliamentarians called on the ACP and the EU to explore innovative financing methods in order to improve access and reduce the cost of ICT use. The JPA advocated partnerships between SMEs in the EU and in ACP countries active in the field of ICTs.

The motion for a resolution drafted by Rabindre Parmessar (Suriname) en Younous Omarjee (EUL/NGL, FR) was adopted by show of hands

Protecting the African elephant

The JPA called for better protection of the African elephant, which is "on a fast track to extinction" according to the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Poaching of elephants and the illegal trade in ivory is already recognised as a serious organised criminal activity, but enforcement should be stepped up, e.g. by securing serious convictions and seizing contraband ivory. The 37 ACP countries through which elephants range should fully implement the "African Elephant Action Plan" established in 2010 through improved monitoring, effective enforcement and reporting.

Written declaration by the Co-Presidents, adopted on Wednesday 28 November 2012.

Next session

The 25th session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly will take place 17-19 June 2013 in Brussels, Belgium. It will be preceded by meetings of its three standing committees 15-17 June 2013.

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ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
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