

# **ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**11th Session from 19 to 22 June 2006**

**VIENNA  
(Austria)**

**ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE COMMISSION**

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**ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly :**

**VIENNA (Austria)**

**19 – 22 June 2006**

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# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by John Bowis

Subject: Desertification

Following the visit during the 9th JPA in Mali to see the reclamation work being carried out on the River Niger, what action has the Commission been able to propose to support action to prevent desertification and to save disappearing rivers in Africa?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Marie-Hélène Aubert, on behalf of the Verts/ALE

Subject: Fisheries agreement with Mauritania and Tanzania

There is continuing disagreement between Mauritania and the EU on the renewal of the fisheries agreement which grants the EU access to fishery resources. The new Mauritanian Government takes the view that previous agreements worked to the detriment of the country's interests and wants the future agreement to incorporate revised terms. The disputes concern the financial amounts involved, compliance by European fishing vessels with the regulations in force and the conservation of fish stocks.

Moreover, in May 2006 the Mauritanian authorities boarded four Spanish vessels fishing illegally in Mauritanian territorial waters.

Can the Commission inform us of the stage reached in the negotiations on the agreement? What practical measures does it plan to take to gear the fisheries agreements towards sustainable development? Does it plan to take measures which offer specific support for small-scale fishing, which is more respectful of the environment?

Can the Commission also inform us of the stage reached in the negotiations on the fisheries agreement with Tanzania?

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ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Hon. Brimah Conteh, Member of Parliament, Sierra Leone

Subject: Support for the provision of electricity

Given that energy is fundamental to development and that the lack of electricity in several ACP States has inhibited sustainable economic management and discouraged both local and foreign investment, and considering that this state of affairs has been exacerbated by conflicts which have destroyed infrastructures, would the Commission adopt, as a starting point in its development strategy, support for the provision of electricity for domestic and industrial use as a sine qua non to ensure the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular as regards the reduction of poverty and the creation of an environment conducive to economic growth and development.

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by H.R.H. Prince Guduza Dlamini (Swaziland)

Subject: Timetable for deployment of EU sugar-sector restructuring support in Swaziland

Given the importance of the sugar sector in Swaziland and the current financial difficulties in the sugar sector as a result of a 37% decline in local currency earnings on sugar sales to the EU since 2002 arising from the devaluation of the euro against the rand, can the Commission indicate the date by which it is envisaged that funds set aside for sugar-sector restructuring will be available for actual disbursement in Swaziland, and will the Commission set in place a mechanism to ensure that this timetable is adhered to?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Sharon Hay Webster, Member of Parliament, Jamaica

Subject: ACP Action Plan on accompanying measures for Sugar Protocol signatory States

The ACP States are concerned that the promised financial support package does not take into account the total losses incurred, nor does it match the scale of resources required by the ACP States for their action plans. The so-called Action Plan for delivery of the accompanying measures, whilst no doubt laudable in intent, is being viewed with increasing scepticism in the ACP. It lacks the firm, bankable assurance of an EU commitment of adequate funds to support the ACP strategies to adapt to the reform, and contains all the ingredients for a major bureaucratic delay, with an array of hurdles to overcome in order to meet its stated objectives.

Can the Commission provide an update on the status of the National Adaptation Strategies submitted by the respective ACP Sugar Protocol States and the timetable for remaining procedures before the funds are released, to ensure front-loading and a clear bankable commitment on the amounts and timings of finance from the EU?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Anne Van Lancker

Subject: Coffee

What is the Commission's standpoint in the current negotiations on the future of the International Coffee Agreement (2001)? Will the Commission argue in favour of the active involvement of small producers? Will it do this by proposing an expansion of the Private Sector Consultative Board? How does the Commission intend to guarantee sustainability and will all stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, organisations representing small producers, the industry and ICO representatives) be involved in this process? Will the Commission argue in favour of giving formal status to a Consultative Board on Sustainability and the establishment of a 'Sustainability Fund'?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Hon. N. Deerpalsing, MP, Republic of Mauritius

Subject: Aid for Trade (AfT) and EDF

Since the Hong Kong WTO Ministerial Conference Aid for Trade is increasingly being viewed as an instrument to deliver on the development dimension of the DDA. Aid for Trade may also help to address the development aspect of the Economic Partnership Agreements being negotiated between the ACP and the EU.

Could the Commission confirm the above thinking and whether it proposes to adopt a holistic and broad consensual definition, scope and delivery mechanism for the still nebulous concept of AfT that will cover all ACP States, particularly under the EPAs, and whether, as a first step, it envisages creating an ACP-EU Aid for Trade Facility to which it will allocate, in consultation with the ACP, a dedicated amount from resources to be decommitted under the end-of-term review of 9th EDF?

There is a lot of confusion as to the exact amount of resources that is still available under the so-called Reserve of the 9th EDF. This applies equally to resources allocated to intra-ACP cooperation.

Could the Commission

- i. provide a detailed breakdown of the total resources kept in the reserve envelope as well as resources allocated to intra-ACP cooperation and provide details of all projects, etc. to which resources have been allocated?
- ii. indicate whether it has already undertaken any preliminary assessment of the various intra-ACP and other projects to ascertain whether they will indeed be implemented and what volume of resources could be released, including from the reserve envelope, in the context of the end-of-term review in late 2006?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Hans-Peter Mayer

Subject: Commercial sexual exploitation of children in the ACP States

Child prostitution remains a serious problem in the ACP States. The UNWTO recently noted the urgent need for projects to combat child prostitution at European level as well.

What is the current situation with regard to child prostitution in the ACP States and what progress has been made with programmes to combat this phenomenon?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, MEP

Subject: Outbreak of Chikungunya

Given that:

- according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) between 28 March 2005 and 19 February 2006 2406 cases of Chikungunya were identified on Réunion and that since March 2005 157 000 persons may have been affected,
- since January 2005 other countries in the south-east Indian Ocean have recorded cases of Chikungunya, in particular Mauritius and the Seychelles, with 2553 and 4650 cases respectively,

what measures can be taken to help the EU region referred to above and the ACP States affected so as to forestall and/or minimise the impact of the disease?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Karin Scheele

Subject: Medical personnel

In the Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Union Development Policy 'The European Consensus' (2004/2261(INI), the explanatory statement clearly states that many low-income countries are off track in pursuing the health-related MDGs. A major issue is the desperate shortage of medical personnel, notably in sub-Saharan Africa. This problem calls for a more systems-based approach to health and development, giving top priority to the strengthening of health systems.

You are no doubt aware that specialised EU organisations provide training in medical logistics to create sustainable, appropriate and responsible health capacity in the poorest countries, most of them ACP countries.

In line with the European effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the reduction of extreme poverty, the reduction of child and maternal mortality and the fight against diseases, what specific action is the Commission willing to undertake in order to support in a sustainable and long-term manner the training efforts made by specialised European institutions and to increase their capacity to respond to the urgent need for improved medical logistics in developing countries, in particular the ACP countries?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Fernando Fernández Martín

Subject: Development and migration

The arrival of new flows of immigrants in the European Union confirms the need for a common approach and full cooperation inside and outside the Union.

What measures will the Commission take to support the efforts of the ACP States in that matter?

What measures will the Commission propose to combat the criminal organisations whose business is the trafficking of human beings?

Will the Commission propose to the Council the Communitisation of the fight against human trafficking related to migration, as provided for by Article 42 of the Treaty?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Marie-Arlette Carlotti

Subject: ACP-EU political dialogue on the issue of migration

On the basis of Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement, does the Commission plan to put forward proposals concerning:

- equal treatment as regards social security for ACP nationals, which was provided for under the Lomé Convention, but never put into practice;
- improved access to short-term visas for ACP nationals;
- the implementation of an information programme aimed at would-be migrants to the EU in the ACP countries?

Does the Commission plan to include these matters in the current negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) or in any future negotiations on readmission agreements?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Ana Gomes

Subject: Impunity in Africa

In March 2006 the EP adopted a resolution on impunity in Africa.

The former Chad dictator, Hissène Habré, remains in Senegalese custody. His trial has yet to begin in Belgium or Africa. What action has the Commission taken to ensure that he is prosecuted?

Charles Taylor has been arrested and transferred to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Concerns over the security conditions for such a high-profile trial have been voiced. What logistical support will the Commission provide to the Court?

More generally, what action is the Commission taking to support the African Union's ability to foster judicial cooperation in criminal matters among its member states?

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**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Johan Van Hecke, on behalf of the ALDE Group

Subject: Haïti

The presidential and parliamentary elections held in February and April 2006 have put an end to the period of transition in Haïti following Aristide's departure in 2004. Years of instability and violence have made Haïti one of the world's poorest countries. Without assistance from the international community, the newly-elected President and his government face a virtually impossible task.

What measures does the European Commission plan to take with a view to offering the country the greatest possible degree of development assistance?

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**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Carl Schlyter, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Subject: DRC conflict

It is a publicly known fact that the conflict in Congo is partly fuelled by the illegal exploitation of its wealth: diamonds, gold, cotton and other minerals. The UN final report (October 2002) provided detailed evidence of the involvement of neighbouring countries, individuals and EU-based private companies (in Belgium, Germany, the UK and France) as well as companies in Asia and the USA. The report recommended imposing sanctions (travel restrictions, freezing of assets and prohibition on the holding of bank accounts) on those individuals and companies whose participation in the pillage of the DRC's resources has been proven.

Does the Commission seriously think it can bring democracy to this country and support the forthcoming election without at the same time implementing the UN recommendation on bringing a long-lasting peace to the DRC by targeting those companies which are destabilising the country?

# **ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

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ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Max van den Berg

Subject: Peace agreement in Darfur

An initial peace agreement has been reached between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army. What measures is the Commission considering to support the enforcement of this peace deal?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Linda McAvan, MEP

Subject: Banana import tariff

Following the introduction of a tariff-only system for bananas in January 2006, can the Commission provide an update on the economic, social and environmental impact of the new regime on ACP banana producers, broken down by region?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Barry Faure (Seychelles)

Subject: Tuna

Given the persistent lowering of tariffs on tuna imported into the European market and the likelihood that this will put higher pressure on tuna resources, on conservation and on the environment, as we will face an increase in unsustainable fishing efforts, encouragement for a growth in illegal trade and the depletion of fish populations, would the Commission agree to an ACP Group request to grant tuna special-case status in the WTO negotiations?

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ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Metsing Mothejoa MP (Lesotho)

Subject: Lesotho's concerns regarding the EPA negotiations

As an LDC in the SADC-EPA configuration and a 'de facto' signatory to the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA), Lesotho is already faced with the challenges of opening up its markets to EU goods, even though, at the same time, its capacity to trade or reciprocate is limited and its ability to attract investment is restricted. What measures can the Commission take to help Lesotho address these concerns in the EPA negotiations?

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**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Assarid ag Imbarcaouane (Mali)

Subject: Economic Partnership Agreements

The process of drafting the EPAs, in particular in West Africa, is proving lengthy, to the point that there is every likelihood that the deadlines for their conclusion will not be met. What steps is the Commission considering with a view to facilitating compliance with the agreed deadlines?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Frithjof Schmidt

Subject: EPA negotiations

Worried by the EPA negotiations in their current form, the EPAs being essentially free-trade agreements between unequal partners, 30 European and ACP NGOs have launched an appeal to revisit the issue of the EPAs.

Given that Article 37(6) of the Cotonou Agreement provides possible alternative frameworks for ACP countries, including non-reciprocal trade arrangements, can the Commission unequivocally state that it is prepared to respect this provision?

Could the Commission tell the Assembly that it will allow the ACP countries the policy scope they need to develop their own development strategy?

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ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Gay Mitchell

Subject: Economic Partnership Agreements

What is the Commission's reaction to the recently adopted Parliament resolution on the development impact of the Economic Partnership Agreements?

Specifically, does the Commission agree that there is a 'lack of a concrete development-friendly result so far in the negotiations, as demonstrated by the increasing concern and dissatisfaction of ACP countries with regard to the failure to deliver the development support measures required for achieving concrete benefits from an EPA, such as binding commitments on development cooperation, concrete adjustment measures to overcome the effects of preference erosion, technology transfer and improved competitiveness'?

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**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Vittorio Agnoletto, MEP (GUE/NGL)

Subject: EPAs and the WTO's differential treatment principle

Article 5 of the 1979 decision, that dealing with 'special and differential treatment', is a founding principle of the WTO. It allows developing countries to implement agreements more slowly or benefit from exemptions. It recognises the need to discriminate in favour of poor countries and to give developing countries the flexibility to adopt their own development strategies, including by enhancing their capacity to take advantage of international trade.

Why has the European Commission negotiated the EPAs not under Article 5 S&DT principles, but rather under the strict GATT Article 24 rules, conceived before trade agreements between rich and poor countries were contemplated, which contain no provision for special treatment for poor countries?

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**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by Vittorio Agnoletto, MEP (GUE/NGL)

Subject: EPAs and duties received on agricultural products by ACP countries

For ACP countries, duties received on agricultural products still represent the main means of guaranteeing many people's livelihoods. Many countries rely heavily on such duties to provide basic social services, given that funding from local taxation is so low. EPAs will certainly result in a reduction in overall government revenues, with Tanzania, for example, expecting to lose up to 36% of its customs revenue. Local industries, such as chicken farmers in Ghana, will be wiped out by the dumping of subsidised EU agricultural surpluses if they do not receive compensation over time.

Does the European Union meet any adjustment costs or provide compensation for this important issue related to the EPA process?

# ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**11th session – Vienna (Austria), 19 to 22 June 2006**

ORAL QUESTION TO THE COMMISSION

by H.R.H. Prince Guduza Dlamini (Swaziland)

Subject: EPAs

In the light of the numerous and complex issues to be dealt with in both the EPA and WTO negotiations, with the latter having stalled, and taking account of the limited capacity of the ACP States to effectively conduct negotiations of this magnitude multilaterally and with the EU, which is the world's major trading entity, will the Commission consider making more time available should ACP States be unable to complete the negotiations on time?

Is the Commission ready to offer a replacement trade regime from 1 January 2008, should it not be possible to conclude the EPA negotiations, and if so what could the ACP States expect in this regard?