



## ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

THE BUREAU

26 November 2008

### **Declaration regretting the absence of the President-in-Office of the European Union Council from the session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly**

The Bureau of the JPA, meeting in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on the occasion of the 16th session, noted that the French Government would not be represented by the President-in-Office of Council, nor by any other government minister.

The French authorities had been informed of the date and place of this session, taking place during the French Presidency of the European Union, when these were fixed, which was one year ago, in November 2007. The French Minister of Development, Mr Alain Joyandet, had stated clearly, when he addressed the European Parliament's Committee on Development in July 2008, that he would duly attend this session.

Having been informed by Mr Joyandet's staff three weeks ago that the Minister would not, after all, come to Port Moresby, mentioning the need for him to attend the UN Conference on Financing for Development at the end of this week (something by no means incompatible with attending the JPA, as attested by the fact that some Members present in Port Moresby will also attend it), Co-President Kinnock asked that he find a substitute minister, either from the French Government or, should they lack the capacity to do so, by another minister of development from an EU Member State, as the Rules of the ACP-EU Council provide.

No reply was received to Mrs Kinnock's letter, but the Bureau learnt that the French EU Presidency would not be sending any minister to the JPA session. They would in fact be sending a former minister. Without wishing to call into question in any way the competence and knowledge of this former minister, the Bureau consider it vital that the Presidency be represented by someone with political responsibility, which means a minister now in the government of an EU Member State.

This will be the first time ever that the Joint Parliamentary Assembly has been slighted in such a way, and the Bureau deeply regrets this refusal to send a minister to answer to the parliamentarians of the ACP states and the European Union.

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