

ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

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**PORT MORESBY
(Papua New Guinea)**

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Reply to questions 1, 2 and 3

By O. Schmidt, A. Imbaracaouane and A. Tapsoba

In the framework of the 16th JPA

The financial shockwaves in the United States and Europe are reverberating in the global economy. The stark reality is that developing countries must anticipate and prepare for a drop in trade, remittances and domestic investments. Developing countries face reduced export demand and reduced access to trade credit. Many of them are suffering from other crises – the food and fuel crises that have strained budgets and balances of payments and raised inflation and living costs. Developing countries can suffer serious consequences from any prolonged tightening of credit or sustained global economic slowdown.

The European Commission is concerned by the impact of the turmoil in world financial markets and the continued high prices of fuel and food. It will be crucial to maintain a focus on support for sustainable growth, poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The European Commission is committed to supporting developing countries in their achievement of the MDGs. In spite of progress made on aid effectiveness structural challenges remain. Many developing countries are still far from being able to achieve the MDGs; even where positive growth has been achieved, inequality is increasing within and among those countries; public budgets are affected by massive losses due to tax evasion.

The European Commission will continue to strongly advocate that all donors including the EU itself will honour their commitment to reach progressively the target for ODA of 0.7 percent GNI by 2015. The EC will continue to play a leading role in development financing and reaffirms its commitment to build its solidarity upon mutual accountability in a partnership among equals; it strives for an ambitious outcome of the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for development in Doha. The European Commission will reemphasise policy coherence for development by strengthening synergies between internal and external policies in support of the MDGs.

The European Commission calls on all donors to prioritise budgetary expenditures and revenues so that efforts to achieve the MDG commitments are not curtailed in times when partners need our support most and that all measures taken at the global level to improve the international financial system take full account of the needs of developing countries, especially the poorest and most fragile.

The European Commission strongly declares to strengthen all measures leading to more effective aid. The coordination of aid programmes with other donors will allow decreasing of transaction costs for the recipient countries. Strengthening of national and international mutual accountability mechanisms, ensuring complementary and coordinated donor activity, increasing aid's value for money, focusing on delivering results will help to support efficiency and effectiveness of all measures to fulfil the MDG commitments.

The negotiation calendar for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) is unaffected by the current financial crisis. However, the current international financial system and any consequent economic slowdown will affect the ACP countries just as it is affecting all other countries involved in the global economy.

Economic history shows that small and closed economies or economies with weak economic governance suffer disproportionately in a global slowdown. EPAs can help the ACP countries to face a crisis with greater confidence since they will help their economies diversify and help establish larger and more stable ACP regional markets.

Reply to Question 6
By A. Van Lancker
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The Mid-term review guidelines will indeed reflect as far as possible the Accra Agenda for Action and include an invitation to the partner country to keep their national parliaments informed of the review process and of its results. However, while the Head of the EC Delegation can sensitise his/her counterpart, he/she has no mandate to bypass the Government of the Partner country. Article 35 of Annexe IV to the Cotonou Agreement clearly specifies that the national authorising officer appointed by the Government of the partner country represents it in all operations financed from the Fund resources managed by the Commission and the European Investment Bank.

Similarly, the Cotonou Agreement (Article 17) does not foresee a particular role for the Joint Parliamentary Assembly in the programming and review process. Article 4(5) of the 10th EDF Implementing regulation¹ foresees that the country strategy papers are sent for information to the Joint Parliamentary Assembly at the same moment as when they are submitted to the EDF Committee for opinion. In the same way, the modified country and regional strategy papers will also be sent to the Joint Parliamentary Assembly for information at the end of the mid-term review process. Furthermore, it could be envisaged to send the Mid-term review guidelines for information to the Joint Parliamentary Assembly at the same moment when they are transmitted to the EC Delegations and partner countries at the start of the mid-term review process.

¹ EU OJ L 152, 13.6.2007, p. 1.

Reply to Question 8
By Johan Van Hecke
Within the framework of the 16th JPA

The Commission has noted the growing concerns being expressed in Africa about the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the African Union's appeal to the UN Security Council to suspend the indictment of President Al-Bashir on the basis of Article 16 of the Rome Statute. In several African countries the governments are exploring the possibility of suspending or preventing proceedings against individuals suspected or accused of crimes falling under the ICC's jurisdiction, in the interests of peace and reconciliation. The African Union has also expressed its concerns about a number of cases that have been referred to the courts of certain EU Member States under national laws applying the principle of universal jurisdiction.

The European Union has discussed these questions openly with its African Union partners, most notably at the 10th meeting of the AU/EU Ministerial Troika on 16 September and at the College-to-College meeting between the AU and EU Commissions on 1 October 2008.

On these occasions the Europeans argued that a distinction had to be drawn between the question of universal jurisdiction, which was a matter of national law, and the jurisdiction of the ICC and other special international courts. The ICC is intended to complement national courts and prosecutes individuals only when national courts are unable to do so. The Commission respects the impartiality and independence of the national judicial systems and the international courts.

The EU fully supports the ICC, the creation of which was a landmark for peace and international justice. It welcomes the fact that 30 African countries are party to the Rome Statute and continually encourages its partners to work together to promote peace and justice, which must go hand in hand.

It does not agree that the ICC discriminates against African States or leaders. Although it is true that the individuals currently indicted by the ICC happen to be African nationals, this is largely because African States such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and the Central African Republic have themselves referred the cases to the ICC. These referrals are the result of the generally very good cooperation between the African States and the ICC. It should be remembered that Europeans are also subject to international criminal jurisdiction. The EU fully supports the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and has made cooperation with the special Court by the Balkan States concerned a specific condition for the association and accession process for the countries of the Western Balkans with the EU.

Reply to question 10
By Alain Hutchinson
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The Decent Work Agenda has been firmly integrated into the policy framework of EC development cooperation. The European Commission has entered into a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the ILO in recognition of the importance of labour market considerations as a factor in promoting sustainable development and for assisting with the reduction of poverty. The rationale for intensifying the collaboration between the Commission and the ILO has been the adoption by the Commission of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. The Commission has recently adopted two policy documents related to the Decent Work Agenda: the Communication from DG Employment "Promoting decent work for all -The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world"². This Communication was followed-up by a Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) prepared by DG Development on "Promoting Employment through EU Development Cooperation" which also addresses the Decent Work Agenda.³

One of the main aims of the SWD is to assist Delegations in the field to introduce the concept of Decent Work into their political dialogue with the national administration concerned and to bring Decent Work criteria to the table during programming negotiations and at other key points such as the mid-term reviews.

Two points must be stressed. The Commission has taken on board the Decent Work Agenda but also supports the Paris Declaration and the idea of aid effectiveness. This means that the Commission regards the principle of 'ownership' by the beneficiary as an essential condition for the success of EC development cooperation. Thus, where our partner ACP country brings to the table a keen interest in promoting the idea of Decent Work, the Commission will certainly be pleased to offer support and assistance.

However, experience has shown that the application of the Decent Work Agenda needs to be adjusted to suit the level of development and the particular conditions of the partner country concerned. The second point, therefore, is that while the view of the ILO is that the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda are deeply inter-related and cannot be pursued separately, the Commission rather emphasises the importance of applying the Agenda in a way that best suits the conditions in the partner country. For some countries this would suggest that employment creation is a priority while for other more developed countries the pillars of social dialogue and social protection might be considered as the main focus.

The promotion of internationally-recognised core labour standards is an established objective of the EU's trade agenda. This objective is included in the Commission's mandate on a systematic basis, although the provisions eventually included in the final trade agreements are the result of a negotiation with our partners. Social aspects are part of EPA negotiations and the first comprehensive regional agreement, signed with the Caribbean on 15 October 2008, includes a full chapter on these issues (Articles 191 to 196). This chapter contains strong commitments, notably on the "right to regulate" (Article 192) and the avoidance of "social dumping" (Article 193). Trade agreements are not used to impose conditionalities or trade sanctions. However, reflecting the partnership dimension of EPAs, the Cariforum EPA contains two mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the provisions on social aspects: a

² COM (2006) 249

³ SEC(2008) 2184

general monitoring mechanism (part V - institutional provisions: Articles 227 to 232) and a specific and detailed monitoring mechanism established in Article 195.

In other ACP regions, the social chapter is still under negotiations in the context of the transition from interim agreements to comprehensive, regional EPAs.

Reply to Question 11
By Vittorio Agnoletto
Within the framework of the 16th JPA

The Commission is currently preparing a series of Communications on medicines and consumer protection policies in the European Union. One of these is the Communication on increasing protection against counterfeit or fake medicines entering the distribution chain of medicinal products. It targets more specifically the questions of false labelling, false provenance and post-production falsification. It does not deal with infringement of trademark and patent law.

With regard to the use of the mechanisms in the Agreements on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), provided for in the Doha Agreement, by countries that do not manufacture medicines, the European Union has put in place the necessary instruments to respond to countries that invoke such provisions. In 2006, the European Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 816/2006 on compulsory licensing, which established a common EU authorisation procedure for producing medicines under compulsory licence where these are intended for export. On 30 November 2007, the European Union deposited the instruments of ratification of the Protocol amending the WTO's TRIPS. Rwanda was the first WTO member country to invoke the system of compulsory licences, but in an application to a Canadian producer (application for 260 000 antiretroviral triple therapy tablets to treat HIV). To date, no such application has been made in Europe.

Reply to Question 12
By John Bowis
In the framework of the 16th JPA

Progress since the UN Convention was signed by the European Community on 30 March 2007, has largely concerned establishing an appropriate institutional structure within which the Convention can be implemented. Thus, the Commissions' proposals to establish procedures for the Conclusion of the Convention, for the Declaration of Competencies and for implementation were tabled in the relevant Council Working Group in September this year.

These proposals comprise a series of technical provisions regarding the application of specific Articles of the Convention and its optional Protocol in the following areas:

- procedure of conclusion (deposit of instruments of formal confirmation and accession; submitting amendments, possible denunciation);
- establishing a framework for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol (nomination of focal point, coordination mechanism, independent mechanism, nomination and election of expert for the Committee of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, reporting etc..).

Setting out clear and unambiguous guidelines for the management of these processes must be done as early as possible. As the provisions of the Convention fall within both the Community sphere of competences and that of its Member States; its 'conclusion' has consequences for reporting as well as for the monitoring of compliance with the Convention.

The European Parliament will be invited to give an opinion.

On the specific points raised by the Honourable Member, certain Delegations have designated contact persons for disability issues. It must be emphasised, however, that all Delegations have staff responsible for social sector matters or for social elements within other programmes who would normally handle issues of disability. The Guidance Note on Disability and Development which would assist their work is currently under revision and updating in order to take account of the new international framework on disability.

The composition of the EC internal monitoring body will be decided upon by the Council based on a proposal from the Commission. The Commission is fully aware of the interest and wish to include a representative with competence regarding Humanitarian Emergencies and Development Cooperation.

Reply to Question 13
By Marie-Arlette Carlotti
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The European Commission is strongly committed to strengthening malaria control and encouraged by the significant progress demonstrated in countries such as Zambia, Rwanda and Ethiopia through expanded coverage with long-lasting insecticidal nets and the introduction of artemisinin-based combination therapies. However, with nearly one million children dying from malaria every year, there is no time for complacency.

The Commission is working with Member States to mobilize funding and develop effective ways to support our partner countries through the European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action. In this context, the European Union has recently launched an EU Agenda for Action on MDGs with specific priority actions and milestones, including increased support of €8 billion for health sector support, which, among others, would be expected to contribute to the provision of some 75 million more bed nets in Africa.

Our key channel for specific financing for malaria is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, where Europe collectively provides the majority of financing, in total US\$ 1.6 billion in 2008, increasing from US\$ 1.39 billion in 2007. The Commission itself has provided more than €622 million to date, and has pledged additional €300 million for 2008-2010. As for other donors, support from EU and the Commission is not specifically earmarked for each of the three diseases, this allocation is driven by demand of the recipient countries. However, in 2007, 24% of all financing from the Global Fund was in support of malaria control. In 2008 and beyond, the Global Fund is expected to allocate substantially more financing for malaria - in the latest Round 8, its Technical Review Panel has recommended financing for malaria projects for US\$ 1.62 billions

The EC is also supporting research on malaria – both basic research and translational research – to develop new interventions (vaccines, new drugs, vector control, etc.) through the Framework Programme (FP) for Research, totalling more than €100 million during the 6th FP (2002-2006), including around €35 million of this to support clinical testing of new malaria drugs and vaccines in Africa, through support given by the Europe-Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP). Under the present FP7 a similarly high level of research support targeting malaria is envisaged.

In addition, we are making predictable and longer term financing available for our partner countries through general budget support and MDG contracts, a new financing modality, which links disbursements to progress in MDG-related indicators, and expands the programming cycle from three to six years. These modalities are particularly relevant for disease control and health, since they enable countries to cover recurrent costs for basic health service structures and health personnel.

The European Commission works closely together with and supports the initiatives of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, in particular we are involved in a good number of WHO-led global coordination efforts on malaria vaccines and drugs and other such thematically defined initiatives. The Commission currently does not provide financial support and has no immediate plans to extend such support to the Roll Back Malaria Partnership.

Reply to Question 14
By Marie H  l  ne Aubert
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The Commission is well aware that the people in the Pacific are probably more than in any other region in the world economically and culturally dependent on their natural environment. At the same time they are particularly vulnerable to climate change and a wide range of natural and man-made disasters.

The Commission has taken account of these facts in its development cooperation policy vis-  -vis the region. In 2006, the EU adopted its first ever comprehensive strategy for the Pacific which put great emphasis on the so-called "blue-green" theme by drawing particular attention to the sustainable management of natural resources and tackling global environmental challenges.

Based on this document and the region's own cooperation and integration goals ("Pacific Plan"), the Commission has elaborated together with the region a response strategy for the period 2008-2013. One of the two focal areas of intervention identified is precisely sustainable management of natural resources and the environment. It is foreseen that a total of   40 million from the 10th EDF Regional Indicative Programme (i.e. 42% of the total allocation) will be set aside for this area. This represents a considerable increase of funds allocated to that purpose compared to the previous programming period. Suggested activities under this focal area comprise: improving the sustainable use of resources, planning and management systems at all levels, promoting ecosystem-based management and strengthening the region's capabilities to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

On the bilateral level, the EC has concluded three Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) in the Pacific, namely with Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Micronesia. These FPAs promote the establishment of policies aiming at well-managed and sustainable fisheries in third countries. FPAs are also an important tool in combating IUU fishing. They oblige the EU and Partner Countries to co-operate in order to prevent and combat IUU fishing, in particular through information exchange and administrative cooperation.

Reply to Question 4**By Jo Leinen****In the framework of the 16th JPA**

The Commission is doing its utmost to ensure transparency and pro-actively communicate about EPAs. It holds regular "civil society" debates in Brussels with a variety of stakeholders, but it also organises seminars and meetings at the local level with Commission Delegations in ACP countries. It is also encouraging its ACP partners to associate civil society to the negotiations. It has upgraded its e-mail alert system and revamped its website to make it more accessible and interesting for citizens, stakeholders and the media – including case studies and success stories which will show how EPAs can make a difference on the ground for economic players and consumers.

Reply to Question 5
By Glyn Ford
In the framework of the 16th JPA

Given the size and remoteness of many countries in the Pacific, development of the services sector is important to their growth, as the countries themselves have recognised. Goods trade with the EU for most of the Pacific countries is limited. The EU and the Pacific countries also agree that Aid for Trade is important in helping our partners take full advantage of the opportunities that will be created by the EPA. The Commission is considerably increasing its AfT for the Pacific, in particular in the context of the 10th EDF Regional Indicative Programme. PACP countries have also expressed their wish that they should receive an equitable share of EU Member States' trade-related assistance.

The EU's aim is to agree with the Pacific ACP countries on a comprehensive EPA in accordance with the Cotonou provisions. The elements of a comprehensive EPA consist of trade in goods, trade in services, trade related rules including those relating to environment and social issues, fisheries, a development cooperation chapter, dispute settlement provisions and provisions linked to the operation of the agreement (institutions, exceptions, final provisions, etc.).

The Commission believes that services play an important role in the development of all Pacific countries. Transparent and predictable rules for services and the establishment of service providers contribute to a pro-business environment. This is important for the development of any country. It helps to attract more investment, leads to improvement of infrastructure, to employment, the transfer of technology and skills and in general generates economic growth. Furthermore, the Pacific has highlighted the importance of openings under the EPA for the temporary movement of Pacific service providers to the EU.

While these areas were previously indicated as priority issues for the Pacific, they have recently said that they are not ready, at this stage, to negotiate services and also some trade related rules in the framework of a comprehensive EPA. A number of reasons were provided for this including that the offer from the EU did not meet their expectations and that negotiations about services with Australia and New Zealand under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) should be held first.

The EU believes that we should continue our discussions on these important issues in the framework of the EPA. We wish to discuss further with the Pacific region the reasons for the development in their position in order to seek a shared understanding of the way forward which meets the development objectives of the agreement and respects the priorities of all countries of the region. We also wish to explore whether negotiations between the EU and Pacific should depend on progress in the region's negotiations with other partners.

Reply to Question 16

By Waven William (Seychelles)
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The mandate of the Centre for the Development of Enterprise, CDE, is to provide business development services to ACP firms. It is therefore a key instrument of the EC support strategy for the ACP private sector.

However, many recent studies have established that this 30 year old Centre is not efficient and needs profound changes in its positioning, structures and functioning if it wants to play the role it was created for. A special task force comprising representatives of the ACP countries and EU Member States has been set up to look into the reforms that need to be urgently implemented.

This joint task force will examine all the issues concerning the CDE future, including matters relating to its budget. But there is a consensus that the CDE must reform first.

Reply to question 7
By Mikel Irujo Amezaga
In the framework of the 16th JPA

Compared with the rest of Somalia, which has been torn by civil war for almost 18 years, Somaliland may indeed seem a heaven of peace and stability. However, Somaliland is not immune from criticism on corruption and on lack of democracy, in particular for the continued delay of the presidential elections. Also the human rights situation is unsatisfactory, in particular for the treatment of Gabooye ethnic minority, a sort of pariah between the leading pastoralist clans, in favour of whom Amnesty International issued an appeal.

Somaliland was a former British protectorate that became independent in 1960 and simultaneously joined the former Italian colony of Somalia under the unified government of Siad Barre. About the time when Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991, Somaliland declared its independence and since then has been struggling for diplomatic recognition.

The international debate whether Somaliland should be independent from the chaos of the south has been recently re-launched also because of the limited results of the ongoing Somalia reconciliation process. This process started in 2004 and so far led to the so called Djibouti Agreement, which was signed in August 2008 under the aegis of the United Nations, and then to the signature of a cessation of hostilities agreement on 26 October.

In the international debate about Somaliland independence the Commission is neutral. The positions of the EU Member States under whose competence the question falls are mixed, with Italy openly in opposition because "former colonial boundaries should not be redrawn". The debate initiated in 2005 within the African Union, has so far led to several visits from the African Union to Somaliland - including contacts with the "government" - but failed to produce a common position. Also the debate at the United Nations is far from producing a clear position.

The Commission therefore bases its relations with Somalia on the current legal status and maintains the agreed position that Somalia should develop a federal structure that provides for regional autonomy.

Reply to Question 9
By Ana Gomes
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The Commission has not addressed the two cases mentioned in the question with Angolan authorities in the context of the political dialogue so far. Based on the specific information presently available it does not seem to be justified to raise these cases with the Government, be it in the political dialogue or in another format. This does not exclude that action may be considered, in close coordination with EU Member States, if in future the situation so requires.

AJPD is in a legal dispute with the Angolan authorities as regards the legality of its statute. According to the available information, AJPD has been working without a valid registration for at least a year and apparently refuses to comply with the requirements of the applicable Angolan law. As far as the conformity of this law with the Angolan constitution is concerned, this is an issue that must be examined in the course of the ongoing legal proceedings and it is not for the Commission to express a position. We should in particular await the position of the Angolan Constitutional Court on this issue, which is closely monitored by the Commission and Member States through their representatives in Luanda.

As to the second case, the information available so far does not allow concluding that the trial was not carried out in conformity with Angolan law or with applicable international human rights standards nor that charges against Mr Lelo were in relation with his activity as a journalist. Therefore the Commission has not formally contacted the Angolan authorities on this specific case.

Reply to Question 15
By Catherine Neris
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The European Commission has responded rapidly to the effects of the four successive tropical storms - Fay, Gustav, Hanna and Ike - that have hit Haiti since August 2008. On 5 September 2008 the Commission, acting through its Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), adopted an emergency decision allocating €2 million of emergency aid to the victims. An emergency decision granting €5 million for humanitarian assistance to the populations of several countries in the region, including Haiti, was adopted on 14 October 2008. These emergency decisions are in addition to the humanitarian aid of €8 million already granted to the people of Haiti for 2008. ECHO is also implementing a disaster-preparedness programme (DIPECHO) in the Caribbean under which the Republic of Haiti has received €1 million since 2007. The aim of the programme is to enhance people's ability to prepare for and protect themselves against natural disasters, and it demonstrated its effectiveness during the recent hurricanes. In view of the scale of the country's humanitarian needs, the Commission has decided to open an ECHO office in Haiti.

In addition, funds from the B envelope of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) will become available as soon as the rehabilitation and reconstruction needs have been assessed.

It is now imperative that the authorities complete their assessment of the damage. Experts from the EU, the World Bank and the UNDP are currently in Haiti to help the authorities with their assessment. This visit follows an initial mission sent under the European Civil Protection's Intervention Mechanism. It could serve as a basis for a donor conference to discuss reconstruction needs and implementation of the growth and poverty reduction strategy. The question of food security and how to revive farming should also be on the agenda. Such a conference could take place in Port-au-Prince at the end of this year or the beginning of next year.

Finally, the Commission will support the Haitian Government's development agenda through the Community Response Strategy developed jointly by the Haitian authorities, the Commission and the Member States that are represented locally. There is a budget of €291 million available under the 10th EDF. The country strategy document is ready to be signed.

As regards the ACP-EU Natural Disasters Facility, €2 million from the 9th EDF has been committed for regional capacity-building to reduce the risks of disasters in the six ACP regions. For the 10th EDF a figure of €180 million has been proposed for disaster risk reduction, primarily for the ACP-EU Natural Disasters Facility. The Commission plans to start programming these funds, together with the ACP countries, as soon as possible. In doing so, it will be guided by the forthcoming EU strategy on reducing disaster risks in developing countries (due at the beginning of 2009).

Reply to Question 17
By Emanuel Jardim Fernandes
In the framework of the 16th JPA

The Cape Verde Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme under the 10th EDF has set aside funds (€11.5 million) to support the implementation of the Special Partnership.

The 1st Cape Verde-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting of 27 May 2008 indeed reaffirmed that political cooperation will be a priority in the context of the EU /Cape Verde Special Partnership and a means to reinforce and deepen the overall cooperation and relations between the two parties.

The two parties undertook to maintain a dialogue in respect of several political and diplomatic priorities concerning the Western African region and agreed to maintain close consultation on issues such as, inter alia, migrations and development, collective security, fight against terrorism and illegal traffics (for example persons, arms, narcotics), in the context of the institutional arrangements applicable to the Partnership (ministerial meetings, high officials meetings) and through the normal diplomatic channels.

The recent upgrade of the EC Delegation in Cape Verde will also facilitate the strengthening and intensifying of such political dialogue.

Concerning the implementation of the Special Partnership, in the few months since the adoption in November 2007 of the Communication by the Council, the Commission and the Government of Cape Verde have worked on several aspects:

- Institutional arrangements: The parties agreed to have one ministerial meeting per year, two meetings per year of the 'Groupe Technique de Suivi' (GTS), while meetings of the 'Groupe Local de Suivi' (GLS) are to be held in Praia at least every three months. If necessary, technical meetings of sub-groups of the GTS will be held.

Several meetings of the GLS and one meeting of the GTS have taken place already. Special attention was paid to the establishment of an operational work plan that should be ready in the beginning of 2009. This work plan should spell out the specific actions foreseen for 2009 within the framework of the Special Partnership, and should include budgets, implementation calendars, responsible entities, etc.

A ministerial troika took place in May 2008 and another one will take place in 2009 in order to assess the implementation of the Partnership.

- Partnership for Mobility. In December 2007, the European Council chose Cape Verde as pilot country for the new 'Partnership for Mobility' (PfM), an initiative aiming at strengthening and deepening international cooperation and dialogue with third countries in the field of migrations in a comprehensive and balanced manner. EU Member States are called to contribute bilaterally to the Partnership.

In the framework of the PfM, a first project of €1 million is currently being appraised. This project covers mainly aspects concerning migration and return of migrant labourers.

- Cooperation with the outermost regions of the EU: within the framework of the 'politique de grand voisinage' (cooperation between the outermost regions of the EU ('RUPs': "régions ultrapériphériques") and neighbouring third countries), the EC approved in September 2007 the 'Programme de Coopération Transnational Madère-Azores-Canaries 2007-2013' (PCT-MAC), successor of Interreg III B. The implementing authority is the Government of the Canary Islands. There are €65.2 million available for the programme from FEDER⁴ funds, of which €28.2 million are foreseen for cooperation with third countries such as Cape Verde.

'Comités de Concertation FED⁵-FEDER' have been established and several coordination meetings have taken place among the implementation authority, the RUPs, the EC and the authorities of Cape Verde, in order to facilitate the use of FED-FEDER resources for the specific purpose of cooperation RUPs-Cape Verde.

- Finalization and approval of Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the 10th EDF: le CSP/NIP⁶ for the 10th EDF for Cape Verde was signed on 4 August 2008. €51 million are foreseen for cooperation with Cape Verde within the framework of the 10th EDF; €11.5 million are specifically allocated to the support of the special Partnership. Two sectors of concentration are foreseen: 1) poverty reduction, both in urban and rural contexts (85% of the initial allocation, through budgetary support); 2) support to the development of the Special Partnership EU/Cape Verde (totality of the 'tranche incitative'). The identification of specific projects is currently underway.

⁴ Fonds européen de développement regional

⁵ Fonds européen de développement - European Development Fund

⁶ Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme