



Monday, 29 March 2010

PRESS RELEASE

Opening of the 19th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

Tenerife, 29 March - 1 April 2010

ACP-EU Assembly calls for tougher EU sanctions against Madagascar

Directorate-General for Communication
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FORMAL OPENING

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The EU must step up its sanctions against Madagascar, said ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) Co-President Louis Michel at the opening of the JPA's 19th session in Tenerife (Spain) on Monday. This item will be on the agenda at the April foreign affairs Council, promised Spain's Foreign Affairs Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos. "I would like to convey one of the Assembly's concerns, which is the dramatic situation in Madagascar" Co-President Louis Michel told Spain's Foreign Affairs Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, who attended the JPA's opening session.

"The Council must step up European sanctions against this country and align them with those decided by the African Union", said Mr Michel. The Spanish minister undertook to ensure that this point would be on the agenda at April's foreign affairs Council.

On the issue of migration, Mr Michel said that "managing migratory flows is far from easy for countries that are doorways to the European Union. There are many lessons to be learned from the concrete case of the Canaries, which, after having had to allow some their natives to leave, have become an El Dorado for others. These islands have now developed themselves, partly thanks to national and European solidarity. This proves, in any event, that public aid works".

Southern Sudan and Haiti

"The letter and spirit of the framework peace accord must be respected, and it must be implemented in good faith", said Mr Michel, appealing to the Khartoum government, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement and neighbouring countries. "All Sudanese have the right to live in peace and out of poverty", he added, on the eve of the forthcoming multi-party elections, the first since 1986. "The timetable for a referendum on the future of southern Sudan must be respected and I think it would be a mistake to try to pre-judge the outcome", he said. The JPA is to adopt an urgent resolution on this issue on Thursday.

Mr Michel backed Michel Barnier's proposal to set up an "EU-FAST" first aid and support team, which would bring together civilians and the military to deliver emergency aid within the first 24 hours of a crisis. "We were forced to acknowledge the lack of co-ordination of international aid, but also European aid" to Haiti, he noted, with a view to the Haiti aid donors' conference to take place on 31 May.

Niger and Madagascar relegated to observer status

"Elections, which should be the ultimate arbiter of political differences as well as the guarantor of peace, stability and security, have become a major source of conflict and political violence", noted ACP Co-President Charles Milupi (Zambia), stressing that "as parliamentarians and members of the JPA, we must be totally opposed to any undemocratic assumption of power, whether they are military coups d'état or civilian manipulation of the democratic process".

Mr Milupi stressed that the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the South African Development Community had been directly involved in dealing with the conflicts in Niger, Guinea and Madagascar.

The JPA, which twice a year brings together 78 MEPs and 78 parliamentarians from African, Caribbean and Pacific states, relegated the delegations of Niger and Madagascar to observer status, without voting rights, due to the lack of constitutional order in their countries.

Mr Michel noted that Niger was "making positive proposals which go in the right direction". Equatorial Guinea, also the scene of political trouble, did not send any delegates to the Tenerife meeting.

EU-Latin America bananas agreement and economic crisis

The impact of the EU-Latin America bananas agreement on producers in ACP and EU countries, including the Canary Islands, will be the subject of a statement by the Co-Presidents, to be approved on Thursday 1 April.

The Canary Islands are a key EU banana-producing region, with 350,000 tonnes in 2009.

The impact of the economic and financial crisis will be the subject of two reports which the JPA will debate on Tuesday 30 March and adopt on Thursday 1 April:

- financial and economic impact of climate change in ACP countries - Frank Engel (EPP, LU) and Buti Manamela (South Africa),

- social impact of the global crisis - Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar (S&D, ES) and Gibson Hlophe (Swaziland)

List of speakers:

Paulino RIVERO, President of the Regional Government of the Canary Islands

Charles MILUPI, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

Louis MICHEL, Co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

Miguel Angel MORATINOS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/60_19/default_en.htm

Link to website of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

Place of meeting: MAGMA Conference Centre - Tenerife (Spain)

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