



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Development

2011/0303(NLE)

19.9.2012

OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and Central America on the other
(16395/1/2011 – C7-0182/2012 – 2011/0303(NLE))

Rapporteur: Catherine Grèze

PA_NonLeg_Interim

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its report:

1. Points out that Central America (CA) is a vulnerable region with high inequality and poverty levels - an estimated 50.3% of the population lives in poverty; recalls that the EU-CA Association Agreement (AA), concluded in May 2010, contains three main pillars: political dialogue, cooperation and trade;
2. Welcomes the fact that this Association Agreement aims to encourage a higher level of integration between the two regions, as well as Central American regional integration; highlights the opportunities that this Agreement offers in terms of improving social cohesion and sustainable development, which are key elements in consolidating economic growth, social stability and democratic engagement;
3. Stresses that benefits that CA may receive in terms of trade preferences are considerable, bearing in mind that replacing the GSP+ with an Association Agreement will bring with it a system of bilateral commitments that are not subject to a time limit and that are such that they will promote investment, the gradual liberalisation of trade in goods and services and public procurement between the parties;
4. Welcomes the fact that this agreement contains numerous references to human rights, the importance of consolidating them and respect for democratic principles, and highlights the importance of ensuring that these articles of the agreement are strictly complied with by both parties; points out that Article 1 of the Association Agreement lays down that human rights and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms are 'an essential element' of the Agreement;
5. Welcomes the fact that the consolidation of the rule of law in each country in the region, the protection and promotion of human rights and protection of the environment remain priorities in relations between the EU and Central America, in the political dialogue and in cooperation, with a view to collaborating with both state and regional institutions and civil society actors, and in this context highlights the EU-Central American Civil Society Joint Consultative Committee and the creation of a Parliamentary Association Committee.
6. Welcomes the fact that the agreement takes account of asymmetry between the two blocs; stresses that Central America is perhaps the region in which the EU has had and continues to have the highest per capita commitment to solidarity and development cooperation in the world.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	18.9.2012
Result of final vote	+ : 19 - : 5 0 : 0
Members present for the final vote	Michael Cashman, Véronique De Keyser, Leonidas Donskis, Charles Goerens, Catherine Grèze, Eva Joly, Filip Kaczmarek, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Maurice Ponga, Jean Roatta, Birgit Schnieber-Jastram, Alf Svensson, Keith Taylor, Eleni Theocharous, Patrice Tirolien, Ivo Vajgl, Anna Záborská, Iva Zanicchi
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Santiago Fisas Ayxela, Isabella Lövin
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	María Irigoyen Pérez, Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu