

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009



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*Delegation to the CARIFORUM — EU Parliamentary Committee*

## **REPORT**

**by David Martin**

**Chairman of the**

**Delegation to the CARIFORUM — EU Parliamentary Committee**

### **1st Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee**

**15 June to 16 June 2011**

**Brussels**

## **A. Introduction**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Cariforum-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee(JPC) took place on 15 and 16 of June 2011 in Brussels, under the chairmanship of David Martin, the chair of the EP delegation to CARIFORUM — EU Parliamentary Committee.

The European Parliament gave its assent to the Economic Partnership Agreement CARIFORUM-EC on 25 March 2009, the first full EPA to be concluded and implemented. Its article 231 provides for the creation of a CARIFORUM-EU Parliamentary Committee, whose main task is to monitor the application and management of this commercial agreement. It also states that the Parliamentary Committee shall cooperate with the Joint Parliamentary Assembly provided for in Article 17 of the Cotonou Agreement, and be able to request of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council specific relevant information regarding the implementation of the Agreement and make recommendations to the same Council, as well as to the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee.

The Parliamentary Committee is a Joint Parliamentary Committee, comprising two delegations with an equal number of members from the European Parliament and from Parliaments of the CARIFORUM states respectively. The decision to establish the permanent European Parliament Delegation to the Committee was taken on 15 June 2010 and a constituent meeting of the delegation was held on 8 September 2010.

In December 2010, President Buzek wrote to all Cariforum legislatures inviting them appoint a Member to the Committee and to attend the first meeting in Brussels in June 2011. One of the main challenges in the preparation of the meeting was the coverage of expenses for CARIFORUM delegates, as without reimbursement, it was difficult for many Parliamentarians to participate, especially from the smaller states. Finally, five of the biggest Caribbean states were represented, and it was clarified that for the future, funds might be available under the EDF for the CARIFORUM side.

Given that it was the first meeting, institutional issues, such as discussions on draft rules of procedures and the election of a bureau, figured prominently on the agenda. The presence of Commissioner De Gucht underlined the importance of this new institution. Fortunately, this meeting followed closely on the first meeting of the Trade and Development Committee in Barbados on 9 and 10 June, one of the other main institutions set up under the agreement.

## **B. The Joint Parliamentary Committee**

The JPC discussions were held in two half-day sessions and encompassed a follow-up and report back from the above mentioned Trade and Development Committee, the exchange of views with Commissioner De Gucht on the state of play of the implementation of the agreement, and a discussion on the programming of development support under the agreement. Ambassador Errol Humphrey, previous ambassador of Barbados to the EU and part of the Cariforum negotiating team for the EPA, presented a very recently accomplished study on *'Implementing the EPA, challenges and bottlenecks in the CARIFORUM region'* The Cariforum Members present were very active in the discussion, and contributed to the good outcome of the meeting.

The body elected its two Co-Presidents, David Martin (S&D, UK) and Surujrattan Rambachan (Trinidad and Tobago), as well as its Vice-Presidents Mrs Eleni Theocharous (EPP, Cyprus), Mr Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE, IT), Mr Rizek Afif Nazario, Dominican Republic and Mr Rabindre Parmessar, Suriname.

A first discussion was also held on the Rules of Procedures, while final adoption is left for the next meeting, which will take place somewhere in the Caribbean region, probably in the beginning of 2012.

**1. *Follow –up and report back from the Cariforum-EU Trade and Development Committee, Barbados, 9-10 June.***

In their opening remarks, both key speakers, Audrey Joy Grant, Ambassador of Belize and Peter Thompson, Director for Development and EPAs, DG Trade, highlighted crucial points in the work of the Trade and Development Committee and touched on a wide range of topics, amongst others appointments of national and regional coordinators, the process of ratification in the EU and in the Caribbean states, the EU's proposal for setting up a working group on trade and investment in Haiti and the need to develop implementation and monitoring mechanisms of the Cariforum-EPA. Ambassador Grant highlighted the positive achievements made by the Caribbean states and stressed the areas where additional progress would be needed. After the intervention of the Ambassador, Mr. Thompson reiterated some of these achievements. He also called for the remaining ten Caribbean States which have still not applied tariff reductions to do so as soon as possible.

The session considered questions arising from the presentation of the two speakers. Mr. Thomson answered questions related, in particular to the Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) and Rum. Mr. Thomson stated that the issue was not discussed in detail during the EU-ACP meeting in Budapest this year, although statistics were provided to the Caribbean states which showed increased export of banana products to the EU. The issue of rum and mislabelling of rum products by producers from third countries was taken very seriously by the EU as noted at the end of the first Q&A session by Mr. Thompson.

During the second round of questions, Mr. Parmessar, MP from Suriname, Mr. Mair, MP from Jamaica, and the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, asked the Commission on a range of issues such as the export-import of used vehicles, export of agricultural products subject to subsidies in the EU, and the place of investments within the TDC. Mr. Thomson, in return, pointed out that if any state feels that it is in some way being subject to unfair competition due to EU subsidised products, there is a provision in the EPA Agreement which provides possibilities of a re-course. Mr. Thompson concluded with a short summary of the considerable work done by both sides. In conclusion, he noted the goodwill of the Caribbean states to set up the EPA implementation unit within the Cariforum Secretariat.

**2. *'Implementing the EPA, challenges and bottlenecks in the CARIFORUM region'.  
(case studies of Barbados, the Dominican Republic and St Vincent and the Grenadines)***

Ambassador Errol Humphrey presented his recent research carried out on the implementation of the EPA in three Caribbean countries namely Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In his opening remarks, the Ambassador stressed the challenges in

implementing the EPA. He noted the need to continue the reforms in the Caribbean states to strengthen national and regional institutions, and improve competitiveness and market access to the EU market and services. Ambassador Humphrey mentioned also the problem with the dissemination of EPA information, stating that there is a lack of well structured and focused initiatives and comprehensive reach out programs designed to illustrate the economic benefits to economic actors. Finally, the Ambassador noted the progress made in the implementation of the EPA, but recommends further efforts to be made in the area of public administration, which is still under-resourced and not well structured in order to ensure its efficiency and transparency.

The session considered questions arising from the presentation of Ambassador Humphrey. The discussion focused on the mechanisms of implementation, food security and debts in the Caribbean states. The MPs from the Caribbean states expressed their concern that states remain dependent on the export of primary goods and that lack of value added products in the Caribbean markets hinders the potentially strong partnership between the EU and the Caribbean states. In response, the Ambassador stressed the importance of strengthening the Cariforum Directorate and the need for greater access to resources and financial instruments to support training courses for administrators to write public project proposals. With regards to food security, Ambassador pointed out that Caribbean states need to add value to their agricultural products to ensure sustainability and the EU should give more support to states which wish to diversify their production and add values to their products. Finally, he urged the EU to not abandon its commitments to support the developing world, because of the challenges they face such as the global economic crisis.

### ***3. Exchange of views on the programming of development support for the CARIFORUM-EC EPA***

The 10th EDF Caribbean Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Programme were signed by the Caribbean Forum of ACP States (CARIFORUM) and the European Commission in November 2008. In September 2009, CARIFORUM communicated its roadmap for regional economic integration and cooperation setting out its priorities and time lines for implementation.

Mr Rune Skinnebach from EEAS (as DEVCO responsible were still in the Caribbean following the TDC) mentioned some of the latest programs and funding opportunities and the state of play. Ongoing initiatives include the EUR 28 million Regional Private Sector Development Programme, which should help the private sector exploit opportunities that the EPA can offer, and which was agreed in December 2010. This programme is currently being implemented. Activities to support the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (EUR 27.5 million) as well as the implementation of the Economic Union of the Organisation of East Caribbean States (EUR 12.6 million) are now in the final stages of preparation and the Commission expects to take Financing Decisions towards the end of 2011. A specific EPA support programme for an amount of EUR 47 million is also under preparation. A decision is likely to be taken by the end of the year or early 2012. Mr Skinnebach noted with satisfaction that the Caribbean states are strongly committed to regional cooperation and the EU remains committed to fund EPA related projects. MPs from the Caribbean states, in return, suggested the EU to simplify administrative procedures for the EDF funding in order to make it accessible to wider state and non-state actors.

### ***4. Election of a bureau and discussion on the Rules of Procedures***

The body elected its two Co-Presidents, David Martin (S&D, UK) and Surujrattan Rambachan (Trinidad and Tobago), as well as its Vice-Presidents Mrs Eleni Theocharous (EPP, Cyprus), Mr Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE, IT), Mr Rizek Afif Nazario, Dominican Republic and Mr Rabindre Parmessar, Suriname.

It also had an interesting discussion on the draft rules of procedure, based on those applied to other JPCs, which had been circulated together with the invitation to the meeting. In general, the draft was welcomed, but some further discussion was needed before a final decision could be taken.

The main points discussed included:

**Rule 2:** try to include a new text which would reflect that Members could be appointed through different procedures, while making it clear that Members on the Committee should be Parliamentarians.

**Rule 3:** add a precision on the length of the term for Members of the bureau.

**Rule 4:** Proposal to include that the Committee should also seek to facilitate minority positions, but it was understood that this needs to be better defined (what is a majority etc). Further discussion is also needed on how to achieve majority (in each delegation separately, or in the whole Committee together)

**Rule 5:** Agenda should be circulated at least one month in advance. The Co-chairs are responsible for setting the agenda.

**Rule 7:** The Cariforum side will need to further discuss how their secretariat could be organised, on the basis of the draft proposal.

**Rule 9:** It should be clarified in a footnote to paragraph 1 that there is a possibility to seek funding for expenses for Parliamentarians from the Cariforum legislatures.

##### **5. *Exchange of views with Mr Karel De Gucht, EU Trade Commissioner***

The EU Trade Commissioner, Mr De Gucht, made a brief overview of the state of play of the Cariforum-EU EPA. He underlined that the EPA helps increase and diversify trade in goods and services between the EU and the Cariforum states. He reiterated the commitments of all actors to make the EPA work and to be properly implemented in order to make it deliver on its development benefits for the region. He also expressed three areas which are crucial for the success of the EPA, namely: the setting up and smooth running of the institutions to manage the agreement; the setting up of a system to monitor results and impacts of the agreement; and the completion of the first major tariff reduction in 2011. He commended the institutional progress with respect to the establishment of the Cariforum-EU Joint Council, the TDC, and the Caribbean EPA's Consultative Committee. However, he also pointed out the slow progress with regards to the EPA implementation. Tariff amendments require legal instruments and procedures to be completed. The same applies to common regional standards or policies. He underlined that Caribbean states need to gradually open up their economies in order to create enhanced regional market and foster predictability for investors and traders. Finally, Commissioner expressed the

need to recall the vision of the EPA which is to improve market access of ACP countries to the EU in full compatibility with WTO requirements and in a development-friendly manner.



*From the left: Lekram Soerdjan (MEP, Suriname), Gregory Mair (MEP, Jamaica), Maurice Ponga (EP, EPP), Rabindre Tewari Parmessar (MEP, Suriname), Mara Thompson (MEP, Barbados), Surujrattan Rambachan (MEP, Trinidad and Tobago), David Martin (EP, S&D), Rizek Camilo Afif Nazario (MEP, Dominican Republic), Oesman Wangsabesari (MEP, Suriname), Peter Šťastný (EP, EPP), Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez (EP, S&D)*

# CARIFORUM - EU Joint Parliamentary Committee

## PROGRAMME

(Version of 14 June 2011)

**Wednesday, 15 June 2011**

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**15.00-18.30 Meeting of CARIFORUM-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee**

**Place:** European Parliament, Paul-Henri Spaak building, room PHS 05B001

**18.30-19.30 Cocktail hosted by Mr David Martin, Chair of the European Parliament delegation to the CARIFORUM-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee**

**Place:** European Parliament, Paul-Henri Spaak building, space in front of the meeting room PHS 05B001

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**20.00- 23.00 Official dinner for delegates**

**Place:** Restaurant Le Mess, Louis Schmidlaan 1, 1040 Etterbeek, Tel. 0032 2 734 03 36

**Transport:** provided by EP

**Thursday, 16 June 2011**

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**09.00-12.00 Meeting of CARIFORUM-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee**

**Place:** European Parliament, Paul-Henri Spaak building, room PHS 05B001

**12.00-12.30 Family photo**

**Place:** European Parliament, Paul-Henri Spaak building, Zero floor

**12.30 - 14.00 Official lunch for delegates**

**Place:** European Parliament, Members Restaurant, Altiero Spinelli building, Zero Floor, Salon 6

## RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

<b>Bureau</b>
David Martin (S&D, Chair)
<b>Members</b>
<b><u>European Parliament</u></b> Daniel Caspary (EPP) Santiago Fisas Ayxela (EPP) Maurice Ponga (EPP) Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) Peter Šťastný (EPP) Robert Sturdy (ECR) Pablo Zalba Bidegain (EPP) Paweł Zalewski (EPP)
<b><u>CARIFORUM</u></b> Rizek Afif Nazario (Dominican Republic) Gregory Mair (Jamaica) Rabindre Tewari Parmessar (Suriname) Surrujratan Rambachan (Trinidad and Tobago) Lekram Soerdjan (Suriname) Mara Thomson (Barbados) Oesman Wangsabesari (Suriname)
<b>Substitutes</b>
<b><u>European Parliament</u></b> George Sabin Cutaş (S&D) Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez (S&D)



**Commission**

Peter Thompson (DG Trade), Ben Nupnau (DG Trade)

**Other participants**

Frank Davis (Embassy of Bahamas), Tyronne Brathwaite (Embassy of Barbados), Audrey Joy Grant (Embassy of Belize), Alejandro Gonzáles Pons (Embassy of Dominican Republic), Angela Vigliotta (Embassy of Dominican republic), Shirley Skerritt-Andrew (ECS Embassies), Patrick Gomes (Embassy of Guyana), Raymond Magloire (Embassy of Haiti), Joseph Antoine (Embassy of Haiti), Paula Hippolyte-Bauwens (Embassy of Haiti), Marcia Yvette Gilbert-Roberts (Embassy of Jamaica), Nicola Barker-Murphy (Embassy of Jamaica), Symone Betton (Embassy of Jamaica), Nirmala Gangaram Panday (Embassy of Suriname), Bruce Lai (Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago), Jerome Joseph (Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago), Tracey Ramsubagh (Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago), Victorin Lurel (Region Guadeloupe (FWI)), Felix Issorat (Region Guadeloupe (FWI))

**Secretariats of political groups**

PPE	P. Rizza
S&D	A. Rouby, R. Mutafchieva
ALDE	U. Pondelek, Conan D'Arcy
ECR	
Verts/ALE	
GUE/NGL	
EFD	
NI	

**Committee secretariat**

Alberto Rodas, Donatella Pribaz, Helena Halldorf Romero, Ana Cristina Rodrigues, Joanna Karolczyk, Nikolina Vassileva, Valeria Liverini, Lenka Dubarre