The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) was created out of a shared desire to bring together the elected representatives of the European Community – the Members of the European Parliament – and the elected representatives of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States that have signed the Cotonou Agreement …
The JPA is a democratic, parliamentary institution which aims to promote and defend democratic processes in order to guarantee the right of each people to choose its own development objectives and how to attain them.

The JPA plays a unique role of parliamentary scrutiny over the other institutions, holding formal Question Time sittings with the European Commission and the ACP and EU Council Presidency every session. Moreover the European Commission is required to report on its action undertaken to follow up on previous JPA resolutions.

The JPA has also obtained important powers of scrutiny over the Country, Regional and Thematic Strategy Papers for the ACP regions and countries, ensuring there is proper parliamentary discussion and analysis of current and planned EDF spending within the ACP group of countries.

Since 2008 the JPA has started to hold regional meetings in each of the six ACP regions, as provided for in the Cotonou Agreement.

Each regional meeting addresses the ongoing EPA negotiations for the region in question as well as discussing matters of common interest to the States in the region, such as the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, regional integration and climate change.

Initiatives taken by the Joint Parliamentary Assembly

The JPA has put forward numerous proposals in many different areas. Recently adopted resolutions include the following subjects:

- Access to energy
- Food security
- Technology transfer
- The Millennium Development Goals
- Security in the Sub-Saharan region
- Free and independent media

It also adopted resolutions on specific ongoing conflicts, such as those in Mali, Libya, Nigeria and Somalia.

Composition and working methods

The representatives of the 78 ACP States should be members of parliament or, in cases of force majeure, representatives designated by the parliament of each ACP State.

They meet their 78 European Parliament counterparts in plenary session for one week twice a year, once in an ACP State and once, usually, in the EU Member State which holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The institution is governed by common, democratic rules set out in its Rules of Procedure.

Two Co-Presidents, one from the EP and the other from an ACP region, direct its work. Twenty-four Vice-Presidents (12 European and 12 ACP) make up its Bureau together with the two Co-Presidents. The Bureau meets at least four times a year in order to ensure the continuity of the work of the Assembly and to prepare new initiatives aimed notably at reinforcing and improving cooperation. It also considers topical political questions and adopts positions on human rights cases.

The JPA Bureau sends fact-finding missions to ACP or EU States, publishes reports and organises election observation missions.

Three Standing Committees were established in 2003. They draw up substantive proposals which are then submitted to the Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

These Committees are:
- Committee on Political Affairs
- Committee on Economic Development, Finance and Trade
- Committee on Social Affairs and the Environment