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on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2011
(2012/2048(INI))

Committee on Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2011

(2012/2048(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the partnership agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states (ACP), of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 (Cotonou Partnership Agreement)¹ and revised in Luxemburg on 25 June 2005 and in Ouagadougou on 22 June 2010²,
- having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), as adopted on 3 April 2003³ and most recently amended in Budapest (Hungary) on 18 May 2011⁴,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation⁵,
- having regard to the Declaration for development-friendly Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) adopted by the JPA on 22 November 2007 in Kigali (Rwanda)⁶,
- having regard to the Declaration on the Second Revision of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (Cotonou Partnership Agreement) adopted by the JPA on 3 December 2009 in Luanda (Angola)⁷,
- having regard to the Communiqué adopted on 29 April 2011 in Yaoundé (Cameroon) at the JPA Central African regional meeting⁸,
- having regard to the resolutions adopted by the JPA in Budapest (May 2011) on: the democratic upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East: consequences for the ACP countries, for Europe and for the world; the situation in Côte d'Ivoire; challenges for the future of democracy and respecting constitutional order in ACP and EU countries; budgetary support as a means of delivering official development assistance (ODA) in ACP countries; and water pollution,
- having regard to the declarations adopted by the JPA in Budapest (May 2011) on: the 4th High Level Forum on aid effectiveness in Busan (South Korea) 2011; uniting for

¹ OJ L 317, 15.12.2000, p. 3.

² OJ L 287, 4.11.2010, p. 3.

³ OJ C 231, 26.9.2003, p. 68.

⁴ DV\875101.

⁵ OJ L 378, 27.12.2006, p. 41.

⁶ OJ C 58, 1.3.2008, p. 44.

⁷ OJ C 68, 18.3.2010, p. 43.

⁸ APP 100.945.

Universal Access in view of the 2011 High Level Meeting on AIDS in June¹,

- having regard to the resolutions adopted by the JPA in Lomé (November 2011) on: the impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on the ACP-EU Partnership; the impact of debt on development financing in ACP countries; the inclusion of persons with disabilities in developing countries; the food crisis in the Horn of Africa, especially in Somalia; and the impact of the Arab Spring on neighbouring sub-Saharan states²,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A7-0328/2012),
- A. whereas the High Representative/Vice President has given assurances that the EU Council should be represented at ministerial level at the sessions of the Assembly, and has clarified that the fact that it was not represented at the 20th Session in Kinshasa in 2010 was a ‘one-off’; whereas the EU Council was represented at ministerial level at both sessions in 2011;
- B. whereas the ACP-EU JPA is the largest parliamentary body encompassing countries of both the North and the South;
- C. having regard to the excellent contribution made by the Hungarian Presidency and by various local authorities to the organisation and contents of the 21st session in Budapest;
- D. whereas two fact-finding missions were organised in 2011, one to Timor Leste and the other to the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (South Korea);
- E. whereas the revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement in 2010 provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen the role of the JPA and its regional dimension and to develop parliamentary scrutiny in ACP regions and countries; whereas ratification of the revision of the Agreement was not completed by the end of 2011;
- F. whereas, in accordance with the Cotonou Agreement, the political dialogue within Article 8 shall be conducted including the JPA;
- G. whereas the JPA regional meeting held in Cameroon in 2011 was a considerable success and resulted in the adoption of the above-mentioned Yaoundé Communiqué, which pointed up, in particular, Members’ indignation about the proliferation of sexual violence, the risks of trivialisation, and widespread impunity;
- H. whereas new rules adopted by the European Parliament governing travel by parliamentary assistants have rendered it impossible for them to assist Members on mission;
1. Welcomes the fact that in 2011 the JPA continued to provide a framework for an open, democratic and in-depth dialogue between the European Union and the ACP countries on the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and its implementation, including the EPAs;

¹ OJ C 327, 10.11.2011, p. 42.

² OJ C 145, 23.5.2012, p. 21.

2. Stresses the added value of holding the JPA sessions in the EU Member States by rotation, and believes that this rotation should be maintained in the future, as has been the case since 2003;
3. Congratulates the Hungarian Presidency on its active contribution to the 21st session, in particular the workshops;
4. Stresses the need to pay more attention to the outcomes of the work of the ACP-EU JPA, and to ensure coherence between its resolutions and those of the EP; is concerned over the fall in the participation of MEPs, in particular at JPA Committee meetings, and asks for greater involvement of MEPs in its meetings and activities; calls for greater flexibility in the admission of parliamentary assistants attending meetings of the JPA in order to enhance the quality of work of their members;
5. Recalls the commitment expressed by the High Representative/Vice President that the EU Council should be represented at ministerial level at the sessions of the Assembly; welcomes the renewed attendance by the EU Council at its sessions in 2011, and is satisfied that the High Representative has ensured a clarification of the role of the EU Council; calls for a clearer delineation of responsibilities between the EEAS and the Commission in terms of the implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
6. Stresses the crucial role of the ACP national parliaments, local authorities and non-state actors in the drafting and monitoring of the Country and Regional Strategy Papers and the implementation of the European Development Fund (EDF), and calls on the Commission and the ACP governments to guarantee their involvement; further emphasises the need for close parliamentary scrutiny during the negotiation and conclusion of EPAs;
7. Expresses concern over budget cuts in EU Member States affecting development policy spending; calls on the JPA to maintain its pressure on EU Member States to meet their 0.7 % GNI target by 2015; calls on the Members of the JPA to give more thought to targeting resources where they are most needed, so as to reduce poverty, and to a more discriminating approach to aid modalities;
8. Draws attention to the need to involve parliaments in the democratic process and in the national development strategies; stresses their vital role in establishing, following up and monitoring development policies; calls on the Commission to supply all available information to the parliaments of the ACP countries and to assist them in exercising democratic scrutiny, in particular by means of capacity-building;
9. Stresses the necessity of upholding the freedom and independence of the media, these being vital elements in ensuring pluralism and the involvement of democratic opposition groups and minorities in political life;
10. Calls on the EU and the ACP countries to encourage citizens, and particularly women, to participate in development issues, since the involvement of society is vital if progress is to be made; acknowledges the problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills of women, and urges the Commission and the JPA to include more women in task forces and working groups, and highlights the valuable contribution of the Women's Forum in this regard;

11. Calls on the parliaments to exercise close parliamentary scrutiny of the EDF; highlights the JPA's key position in this debate, and calls on it and the parliaments of the ACP countries to take an active part therein, in particular in connection with the ratification of the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement;
12. Calls on the European Commission to update the JPA on the state of play of the ratification of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, as revised in Ouagadougou on 22 June 2010;
13. Recalls that under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement the political dialogue under Article 8 shall be conducted including the JPA, and that therefore the JPA should be duly informed and involved;
14. Reiterates the importance of an enhanced, genuine and more comprehensive political dialogue on human rights, including non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
15. Welcomes the increasingly parliamentary – and hence political – nature of the JPA, together with the ever more active role played by its members and the greater quality of its debates, which are helping it make a vital contribution to the ACP-EU partnership;
16. Is concerned at the increase in violence and discrimination against homosexuals in some countries, and calls on the JPA to put this on the agenda for its debates;
17. Draws attention to the fact that the discussion about the post 2020-future of the ACP group has already begun, and stresses the important role that the JPA will have to play in this discussion; highlights in this regard the need to clarify the future roles and relations of the different groups (ACP, AU, LDCs, G-77, regional groupings); underlines the need for comprehensive joint parliamentary oversight, independently of the final outcome;
18. Highlights the importance accorded by the JPA to transparency in the exploitation of and in trade in natural resources, and stresses that the JPA will push further for appropriate legislation in this regard;
19. Calls on the JPA to continue to monitor the situation in North Africa and in ACP countries in crisis, and to pay closer attention to situations of state fragility;
20. Calls on the JPA to continue to organise its own election observation missions on the same basis as the successful mission to Burundi in 2010, inasmuch as they reflect the JPA's dual legitimacy, while ensuring the independence of its electoral missions and undertaking close coordination with other regional observation bodies;
21. Welcomes the fact that one further regional meeting as provided for in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the JPA Rules of Procedure was held in 2011; considers that these meetings make for a genuine exchange of views on regional issues, including conflict prevention and resolution, regional cohesion and EPA negotiations; commends the organisers of the successful meeting in Cameroon;
22. Welcomes the conclusion of the work of the Working Group on Working Methods, and

the adoption of a first set of amendments to the Rules of Procedure in Budapest, and calls on the JPA Bureau to implement its remaining recommendations, in order to improve the efficiency and political impact of the JPA, both in the implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and on the international stage;

23. Stresses the importance of the on-site visits organised during the JPA sessions, which complement the part-session discussion;
24. Calls on the JPA to continue its discussions on the organisational costs of its meetings;
25. Welcomes the participation of representatives of the European Parliament and of the JPA in the informal council of development cooperation ministers organised by the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in Sopot on 14 and 15 July 2011, and calls on the future presidencies of the Council to do the same;
26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the ACP Council, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the JPA Bureau, and the Governments and Parliaments of Hungary and Togo.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Joint Parliamentary Assembly met twice in 2011. The 21st session was held in Budapest (Hungary) from 16 to 18 May and the 22nd session was held in Lomé (Togo) from 21 to 23 November. Ten resolutions and two declarations were adopted. One regional meeting was also held during the year, in Yaoundé (Cameroon).

In the course of its proceedings, the JPA welcomed the Member of the Commission with responsibility for development, Mr Andris Piebalgs. The successive Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Council also attended both sessions.

The following also took part in the work of the Assembly:

H.E. Pál Schmitt, President of the Republic of Hungary, H.E. El-Hadj Bonfoh Abass, President of the National Assembly of Togo, H.E. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of Niger and H.E. Faure Gnassingbé, President of Togo.

The Bureau of the JPA was able to organise two fact-finding missions, one to Timor Leste and the other to the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (South Korea), but decided it was too premature to send a mission to Fiji as originally intended. The mission to Timor Leste spent several days in the country, meeting all the main authorities and undertook to support the electoral process there, which resumes in 2012.

In a break with tradition, the JPA held both of its plenary sessions in 2011 over three days, rather than four, thereby enabling considerable savings to be made in terms of accommodation and related costs.

Standing committees

The three standing committees met four times: twice alongside the sessions (in Budapest and Lomé) and twice (in Brussels) between sessions. The committees' main role is to draw up reports which are subsequently adopted at the plenary sessions (a total of six reports per year).

Moreover, the committees are responsible for following up resolutions by hearing from the Commission officials with responsibility in the relevant areas. This provides an opportunity – and sufficient time – for in-depth dialogue on the action taken.

Attendance by European members of the JPA continued to decline, leading for calls from ACP members to reschedule meetings so that they do not clash with other European Parliamentary business.

21st session in Budapest (Hungary)

The 21st session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly was held from 16 to 18 May in Budapest, Hungary (the country holding the EU Council Presidency).

In addition to the three reports by the standing committees, on democracy and constitutional order, budgetary support and water pollution, the JPA adopted resolutions on democratic upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East and the situation in the Ivory Coast. Two

declarations on Aid Effectiveness and AIDS, as well as interim amendments to the JPA Rules of Procedure were also adopted. The workshops on climate change and agriculture, conducive education and innovation for development all attracted a large number of participants and great interest.

22nd session in Lomé (Togo)

The 22nd session of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly was held from 21 to 23 November in Lomé (Togo).

The Assembly adopted the three resolutions contained in the reports by the standing committees on the Treaty of Lisbon, debt, and persons with disabilities. The session also adopted resolutions on the food crisis in the Horn of Africa and the impact of the Arab Spring on neighbouring Sub-Saharan states. Two Co-Presidents' declarations on human rights in Eritrea and the security situation in Somalia were also issued.

The workshops on energy, malaria and youth unemployment in Togo provided good opportunities to discuss important regional issues in depth.

Fact-finding and study missions

The Assembly organised two fact-finding missions in 2011, one to Timor Leste and the other to the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (South Korea). The mission to Timor Leste, organised at the last minute, was fraught with logistical difficulties concerning lack of regular flights and shortage of hotel accommodation, but was able to conclude its work satisfactorily. Members were able to meet the President, governmental representatives, parliamentarians, international agencies in situ and civil society. The mission undertook to support the country in the further development of its democracy through the elections to be held in 2012.

Future developments

Through the quality of its work, the JPA has succeeded in establishing itself as a key player in North-South cooperation.

The Assembly has played, and continues to play, a key role in monitoring the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Hearings of the head negotiators on both sides, meetings with economic and social players (both at formal meetings and at events held alongside them) and interaction between European and southern parliamentarians have helped to make the process more transparent and have made it easier to take local issues into account. Whatever the outcome of the negotiations, there can be no doubt that the Assembly's work has had a bearing on the process.

In 2010 the Commission and the ACP countries negotiated proposals for the second revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. In 2011 the ratification process began but was not concluded. The revision provides for an enhanced role for the JPA in scrutiny of other institutions as well as for the regionalisation of the ACP group being brought about by the EPA process. It is important for the JPA to monitor developments extremely closely in order to ensure that it can survive and move forward as an institution towards the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020. The Committee on Development is also closely involved in the ratification of the revision through the European Parliament consent procedure and it is hoped

that a conclusion can be reached in 2012 to this process, despite disagreements over EPAs and non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the establishment of the European External Action Service have had an impact on the relations between the JPA and the other institutions and it is hoped that the presence of the EU Council at both sessions in 2011 was a signal that relations between the Council Presidency and the EEAS have now been properly established and that both will be able to work as constructively with the JPA as the European Commission has done so in the past.

Lastly, in 2011 the Working Group on the Working Methods of the JPA, established in order to enhance the political role of the JPA as well as to provide for improvements in efficiency, concluded its work, enabling a first set of amendments to the Rules of Procedure to be adopted in Budapest. Although it was not possible for the remaining issues to be resolved for the 22nd Session, it is to be hoped that its proposals for further changes to the Rules of Procedure can be adopted in the course of 2012.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	9.10.2012
Result of final vote	+: 21 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Thijs Berman, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Corina Crețu, Leonidas Donskis, Catherine Grèze, Eva Joly, Filip Kaczmarek, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gay Mitchell, Norbert Neuser, Bill Newton Dunn, Maurice Ponga, Jean Roatta, Michèle Striffler, Alf Svensson, Eleni Theoharous, Patrice Tirolien, Ivo Vajgl, Anna Záborská, Iva Zanicchi
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Cristian Dan Preda