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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 103(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Helmuth Markov, Vittorio Agnoletto, Luisa Morgantini, Jens Holm,
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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on Economic Partnership Agreements

European Parliament resolution on Economic Partnership Agreements

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 October 2007 on Economic Partnership Agreements (COM(2007)0635),
 - having regard to the Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 19 November 2007 with regard to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA),
 - having regard to the Conclusions of the Meeting of the Ministers of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States at the end of their meeting in Brussels on 8 and 9 November 2007,
 - having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. recalling that the main objective of ACP-EU partnership should be to promote the development of ACP countries in order to solve the huge problems of poverty that most of them are facing, and to allow them to develop the economic strength to be able to integrate into the world economy under fair conditions,
- B. whereas many ACP governments have stated that signing a reciprocal free-trade agreement (FTA), such as the EPA being negotiated with the European Union, even with safeguards and a degree of asymmetry, represents a very serious threat to their industrialisation, their agriculture, their food security, and most of the revenues enabling them to ensure public services,
- C. whereas UNCTAD's September 2007 report claims that *'North-South agreement can often limit the long-term growth of competitive industries in developing countries'*,
- D. whereas after dismantling of the main instruments designed to stabilise the prices of raw commodities, most recently the sugar agreement, the EPA proposal in its current form is another shift from an ACP-EU relationship based on development to an ACP-EU relationship centred on applying neoliberal politics and ensuring market access for the EU,
- E. deploring the fact that the European Commission has not so far proposed maintaining the trade preferential regime at the WTO, though development is an essential declared goal of the WTO, and despite the potential for an alliance of the 27 EU Member States and the 79 ACP countries for maintaining the trade preferential regime,
- F. rejecting the pressure exerted by the European Commission for tariffs to be imposed on many exports from non-LDC ACP States from 1 January 2008 if EPA are not in place, which would destroy the welfare and livelihoods of millions of workers in the ACP States,
- G. whereas it has taken the European Commission many years to begin considering the demands of the ACP countries to negotiate a development chapter in the EPA negotiations

and whereas Commissioner Mandelson himself has recently recognised that *'the Member States have more to do to clarify the proportion of additional aid for trade commitment which will go to the ACP countries'*,

- H. underlining the fact that the Cape Town Declaration called for negotiations to be structured in an open, transparent way, taking into account differences in sources and development between the two negotiating sides,
 - I. recalling that the European Parliament and the ACP-EU JPA have insisted that no ACP country, in its trade relations, should find itself in a more unfavourable situation after 2007 under the current arrangements,
 - J. remaining very concerned at the announcement by the European Commission that it will negotiate with some countries in the region and exclude others, thereby dividing the regions instead of strengthening regional integration,
 - K. whereas the current behaviour of the European Commission negotiators and their insistence on opening up ACP markets is affecting the traditionally good EU-ACP relationship and the potential of such an alliance in future international negotiations,
1. Issues a warning as to the huge social and environmental consequences of the current direction of the EPA negotiations, which are geared to reciprocal market access and not to development, and rejects the pressure being brought to bear on the ACP regions to sign EPA in a hurry, with the threat of the disappearance of preferential trade agreements from January 2008; recognises the fact that none of the ACP negotiating teams is in a position to conclude any EPA for the moment;
 2. Takes note of the announcement by the European Commission on 23 October 2007 and the decision of the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 19 November 2007 to significantly change the EU negotiating stance on EPA with the ACP countries;
 3. Urges the European Commission to immediately notify the WTO that the negotiations have not yet been concluded (neither has the DDA) and that the EU will extend its preferential trade regime for at least two more years for all ACP countries;
 4. Considers that, on the EU-ACP partnership agreements the lead must fall to the Commissioner for Development and his services, with the cooperation of the Commissioner for Trade;
 5. Urges the European Commission to acknowledge that much more time is needed for ACP States to assess, in a comprehensive way, the implications of the agreements proposed, and to have their own input, given that negotiations have only taken place in earnest for the past two years;
 6. Urges the European Commission to clearly exclude from the negotiations issues such as the Singapore Issues and privatisation of services, and not to insist on those countries being subject to all the international intellectual-property instruments as industrialised countries, without taking account of the imbalance in ownership of patents between southern and northern countries and the need for those countries to reduce the technology;

7. Stresses that the European Commission must honour commitments made to ACP countries under Article 37(6) of the Cotonou Agreement and should ensure that those countries that do not sign an EPA, including non-LDCs, are provided with a new framework for trade which is equivalent to their existing situation; takes note as well that the European Commission recently announced that it could grant GSP+ to some countries such as the Seychelles, and others, which are not interested in signing EPA;
8. Believes that all agreements reached, whether interim arrangements or full EPA, must ensure that no country is left worse off after the expiry of the negotiating deadline, as the European Parliament has repeatedly demanded;
9. Rejects any intention by the European Commission to negotiate with individual countries, which would break subregional unity; urges the European Commission to prioritise the strengthening of genuine regional markets and stresses the regional integration of ACP countries;
10. Calls on ACP and EU authorities to address ratification the 10th EDF as a matter of urgency without any conditionality linkage with the EPA negotiations; deplores the delays in ratifying and implementing the 10th EDF, as a result of which there is likely to be a reduction in annual aid allocations to ACP-EU cooperation activities over the first 15 years of the Cotonou Agreement;
11. Deplores the fact that, despite European Parliament insistence, no specific instruments have been developed to safeguard and promote the specific rights of women and girls, and that there has been no gender mainstreaming in the EPA negotiation process;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the governments and parliaments of the ACP countries, the European Commission, the African Union Commission, and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD.