

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5264/07
by Catherine Neris (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Sugar and economic partnership agreements

Since 1975, the Cotonou Agreements have made informed regulation of trade relations between the EU and the ACP countries possible, thus protecting the fragile markets of the ultraperipheral regions from ACP and least-developed country sugar imports, and ensuring that overseas production has a guaranteed outlet in mainland Europe.

The denunciation of these measures by the Commission calls this whole situation into question, and constitutes a real threat to agriculture and indeed the whole socioeconomic fabric of the ultraperipheral regions, and particularly the French regions. In the case of Martinique, whose entire sugar production is destined for the local market, a single shipload from the ACP or least-developed countries could in future help to destabilise the island's economy and close its last factory.

Under these conditions, as the negotiations on the future economic partnership agreements continue, what measures does the Commission intend to take to guarantee the viability and development of the sugar-cane sector in the ultraperipheral regions, along exactly the same lines as the efforts made by Commissioner Fischer Boel in the recent reform of the COM in sugar?

Does the Commission intend to defend the idea of an 'exclusion clause' in the long term, well beyond the 2014-2015 deadline which is sometimes spoken of? What instruments does the Commission envisage for guaranteeing profitable outlets for overseas production, outlets which are the sine qua non of the survival of an industry to which no economically credible alternative exists at the present time?