

ORAL QUESTION H-0817/07  
for Question Time at the part-session in November 2007  
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Elspeth Attwooll  
to the Commission

Subject: EPA Deadline: Safeguards for ACP countries

The current negotiations regarding Economic Partnership Agreements, which will replace the current trade system for ACP countries under the Cotonou Agreement, reach their deadline at the end of next month. The reason for civil society's campaign against the conclusion of these agreements by then is the fact that key aspects of the agreements have not yet been sufficiently discussed. With a too speedy conclusion to the negotiations, the already fragile markets of some of the world's poorest nations would have to suffer a liberalisation that could have seriously adverse effects on ACP exports to the EU, and considerable repercussions for the funding of their health and education systems. ACP countries therefore require more time to negotiate, maintaining flexibility to plan their own trade reforms. It is imperative that these negotiations remain fair.

If, however, the EPAs are not concluded by the end of the year, what does the Commission propose in order to protect the countries affected?

Tabled: 17.10.2007  
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