

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3565/09
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to the Commission

Subject: Agreement between the EU and Central America

In November 2007 the European Union and Central America initiated negotiations for an Association Agreement between the two regions leading to the establishment of a Free Trade Agreement. The process has been moving forward extremely quickly.

The Association Agreement contains fewer human rights conditions than the current GSP+ system. The clauses on human rights conventions include no penalties and are dealt with in a sustainable development chapter of the trade pillar, with a proposed monitoring mechanism that is not binding for the rest of the trade pillar, nor related to the political dialogue or development cooperation pillars. Why is the EU putting less emphasis on human rights in the Association Agreement with Central America than in the GSP+?

Civil society access to information on the content of the agreements is very limited, and mechanisms for participation are non-existent. What is the Commission doing to increase transparency and guarantee participation in these negotiations?