



ACP-EU - JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Press Release

Monday, 17 March 2014

Louis Michel: denying financial support to the CAR would be "unpardonable"

"We cannot deprive transitional President Catherine Samba-Panza of the means she needs", to bring about a return to constitutional order in the Central African Republic, as "this would be unpardonable", said ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Co-President Louis Michel, opening of its 27th session in Strasbourg.

Mr Michel noted that the task of the CAR government was "gigantic: making the country safe, rehabilitating national and local institutions, reopening town halls, getting kids back into classrooms", but also "re-establishing economic normality", "organising reconciliation", rebuilding a health system, and "achieving the return of refugees and displaced persons".

"There is need to urgently bolster international presence to protect civilians from reprisal attacks and shepherd the transition to peace and democratic order," said JPA Co-President Fitz A. Jackson (Jamaica). "The situation in South Sudan is equally worrisome," he added, voicing the hope that the two factions there would resolve their differences.

Repeal Uganda's homophobic law

"Any law that criminalises homosexuality is a clear breach" of international agreements that protect minorities and "must be immediately repealed", said Mr Michel of the law signed on 23 February by the President of Uganda, which "substantially toughens the penalties handed down to homosexuals".

"We can never accept that governments use some kind of cultural argument as a pretext to justify demonising homosexuality", warned Mr Michel, underlining that "the right to be different is a founding expression of the rights of man".

HIV/AIDS - work "far from over"

Despite the extension of treatment to about 10 million people living with HIV, and the fact that "some 25 countries have reduced new forms of HIV infections by more than 50%", "the work is far from over", said JPA Co-President Fitz A. Jackson. He stressed the need to keep up the momentum, tackle "in a more robust way the social and

cultural practices that impact on HIV/AIDS" and fight "the stigma and discrimination", attached to them.

Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament Evengelos Meimarakis, who formally opened the JPA proceedings in Strasbourg, stressed the role of national parliaments as "guardians of the rule of law and good governance" and stressed the need to step up international cooperation on migration to Europe, climate change and renewable energy sources.

27th ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) brings together elected representatives of the European Union (EU) and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP), with MEPs and MPs from the 78 signatory states to the Cotonou Agreement, which is the basis for ACP-EU development cooperation.

The Assembly will vote on Wednesday 19 March on three resolutions:

- Regional integration and modernisation of customs for sustainable development in ACP Countries, in cooperation with the EU, Co-rapporteurs: Piet Van Der Walt (Namibia) and Oldřich Vlasák (ECR, CZ)
- The global spread of terrorism: the role of the internet and social media, Co-rapporteurs: Moses Kollie (Liberia) and Zita Gurmai (S&D, HU)
- Mining for oil and minerals on the seabed in the context of sustainable development, Co-rapporteurs: Joe Koim Komun (Papua New Guinea) and Christa Klass (EPP, DE).

Links

[ACP-EU JPA \(Joint Parliamentary Assembly\) website](#)

[Draft agenda of the meeting](#)

[Follow the debates via EP Live](#)

[EP Foreign Affairs Press Twitter](#)

[Background note on the meeting](#)

[EbS coverage](#)

Contact

Vaclav LEBEDA

European Parliament Press service

: +32 498 98 33 27

: vaclav.lebeda@europarl.europa.eu