


Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2002/2097(INI)
Procedure completed	
Recommendations for the negotiation of economic partnership agreements with ACP regions and countries	
Subject 6.20.03 Bilateral economic and trade agreements and relations 6.30 Development cooperation 6.40.06 Relations with ACP countries, conventions and generalities	
Geographical area ACP countries	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	DEVE Development and Cooperation		18/04/2002
		GUE/NGL BOUDJENAH Yasmine	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		04/06/2002
		PSE TITLEY Gary	

Key events			
16/05/2002	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/09/2002	Vote in committee		Summary
03/09/2002	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0278/2002	
25/09/2002	Debate in Parliament		
26/09/2002	Decision by Parliament	T5-0453/2002	Summary
26/09/2002	End of procedure in Parliament		
14/11/2003	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2002/2097(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 050; Rules of Procedure EP 114

Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/5/16233

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A5-0278/2002	03/09/2002	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T5-0453/2002 OJ C 273 14.11.2003, p. 0202-0305 E	26/09/2002	EP	Summary

Recommendations for the negotiation of economic partnership agreements with ACP regions and countries

The committee unanimously adopted the own-initiative report by Yasmine BOUDJENAH (EUL/NGL, F) containing the European Parliament's recommendations to the Commission on the negotiation of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the ACP countries and regions. Starting from the premise that the multilateral trade liberalisation decided on during the Uruguay Round had resulted in inequality and that, despite the trade preferences granted by the EU to the developing countries, the ACP countries were experiencing many difficulties in exporting to the EU (in particular owing to non-tariff barriers such as technical standards and health measures), the report drew the Commission's attention to the following points: - the principle of genuine EU-ACP partnership required that account should be taken, in the negotiations, of levels of development and of the huge socio-economic impact which introducing a form of reciprocity in trade relations with the EU would have on the ACP countries. The Commission was asked to conduct an impact analysis reviewing the current benefits and the future sustainability of the EPAs and to provide this information to the countries concerned so that each ACP state during the first phase of negotiations could undertake a proper EPA impact assessment study; - the need to redefine the notion of 'special and differential treatment' (SDT) in more specific and up-to-date terms in order to meet the new commercial, financial and technological challenges; - adjustment efforts would require specific aid programmes, which in turn meant that funds must be specially allocated by the EU. The committee stressed the importance of technical assistance for the ACP countries and the need to encourage technology transfer; - the question of the external debt of the ACP countries should be reviewed with the aim of reducing and, if possible, cancelling it; - MEPs called for regular parliamentary monitoring of the EPA negotiations; the timetable should be sufficiently flexible and the initial stage of the negotiations should extend over a sufficiently long period to enable a clear definition of the future EPAs' objectives to emerge; - the liberalisation of services should be tackled with the utmost caution and in all cases excluding the liberalisation of essential public services (such as education, healthcare, water, energy and transport). Lastly, the committee called for greater and closer cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries within the WTO.?

Recommendations for the negotiation of economic partnership agreements with ACP regions and countries

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Yasmine BOUDJENAH (EUL/NGL, France) regarding the negotiation of partnership countries with the ACP countries. (Please refer to the document dated 03/09/02.) Parliament pointed to the huge differences that exist between the EU and ACP countries. Before liberalisation and a system of trade reciprocity are introduced, trade obstacles (non-tariff barriers, subsidies for EU products) and structural obstacles (product processing deficit, technological backwardness, weakness of local market) should be gradually lifted since they have been major factors preventing the ACP countries from taking full advantage of the non-reciprocal facilities which currently exist. In order to be able to export finished products to the EU, temporary selective protection measures are essential. The purposes of closer cooperation between the EU and ACP in the WTO are as follows: -a flexible interpretation of the principle of "special and differential treatment" which will enable the EU's system of non-reciprocal trade facilities for the ACP to be extended beyond 2008, so as to enable those countries to develop; -consolidation of the commodity protocols and extension to other products that are important to ACP development; -reconsideration of the TRIPs Agreement to facilitate technology transfer, to relax conditions for granting manufacturing patents to protect public health, and to protect biodiversity. With regard to the negotiation process, Parliament was concerned to ensure that the structure and organisation should be decided upon by both parties free from any pressure. The right of least-developed countries to non-reciprocal trade preferences must be respected. The political cohesion of the ACP group should be preserved, and there is a need for flexibility in the Commission's approach to the negotiations in order to accommodate the different levels of development of the ACP countries. A uniform approach would be counterproductive.?