


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2123(INI)	Procedure completed
EU/Caribbean relations: partnership for growth, stability and development		
Subject 6.40.10 Relations with Latin America, Central America, Caribbean islands		
Geographical area Caribbean islands		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	DEVE Development		
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Key events			
01/03/2006	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2006)0086	Summary
30/05/2006	Vote in committee		
15/06/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
15/06/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0211/2006	
06/07/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
06/07/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0304/2006	Summary
06/07/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2123(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Strategic initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	DEVE/6/36215

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2006)0086	02/03/2006	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		SEC(2006)0268	02/03/2006	EC	
Committee draft report		PE374.040	03/05/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE374.179	17/05/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0211/2006	15/06/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0304/2006	06/07/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)3801	28/08/2006	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)3874-4	29/09/2006	EC	

EU/Caribbean relations: partnership for growth, stability and development

PURPOSE: the presentation of an EU-Caribbean Partnership for growth, stability and development.

CONTENT: in preparing this Communication, the Commission points to the strong ties that the EU has traditionally held with the Caribbean. Not only through the French DOMs and the UK/Dutch OCT's but also through the Caribbean's prominent role within the ACP group of States and its inclusion in the Cotonou Agreement. The EU-Caribbean dimension is also strengthened by the wider EU-LAC strategic partnership which was forged between the EU, the Caribbean and the Latin American States in Rio, 1999.

The new strategy proposes the setting up of a mutually beneficial partnership for the benefit of development, democracy and security. A number of concrete actions are proposed by the Commission:

1. A political partnership based on shared values:

A political partnership, in which good governance and the rule of law is promoted, is key to the strengthening of democracy and human rights. Supporting good governance has the added advantage of improving gender equality, social cohesion, security, stability, conflict prevention, migration, drugs prevention and regional integration. In short ? many of the challenges facing the Caribbean today. Within the context of a political partnership the EU will support key institutions on whom good governance depends ? the judiciary, parliament and public financial managements systems. The fight against fraud and corruption will be an additional EU-Caribbean priority.

1. Addressing economic opportunities and vulnerabilities:

This heading focuses on the EU's development policy vis-à-vis the Caribbean. The EU's policy is based on the notion of encouraging developing countries to harness the globalisation process to their advantage. The EU will support regional integration efforts in the Caribbean. It will also seek to make the economies of the Caribbean more competitive, to help them diversify exports and to help support the establishment of regional markets.

1. Environment and natural resources.

The Caribbean States face many environmental challenges, all of which impact strongly on the region's economic capacity. In its partnership with the Caribbean, the EU will help contribute to increasing the region's ?Natural Disaster Management? system. Emphasis will be given to risk reduction, preparedness, early warning, prevention and mitigation.

1. Promoting Social Cohesion and Combating Poverty.

The strategy will focus on relieving chronic poverty and seek to improve a sustainable livelihood for the Caribbean people. Co-ordination efforts to combat drug trafficking will also be given particular EU support. Lastly, providing a knowledge-based economy in the Caribbean will be a priority for EU initiatives in the Caribbean.

Next steps : based on a shared vision of the future, and through an enhanced political partnership and the support of actions to address the region's socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities and to promote social cohesion and combat poverty, the EU will be a steadfast partner for the Caribbean in its efforts. The EU ? Caribbean Troika meeting in the context of the EU-LAC Summit in May 2006 will mark the start of a renewed and broad political dialogue.

EU/Caribbean relations: partnership for growth, stability and development

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Gabriele Zimmer (EUL/NGL, DE) on the EU-Caribbean partnership for growth, stability and development. It applauded the involvement of the CARIFORUM Group in the discussions on the draft Commission Communication and welcomed the fact that the communication had taken account of most of the concerns raised by the States in the region. However, it regarded Parliament's de facto marginalisation by means of a timetable which ruled out its involvement in the drafting of the cooperation strategy for the Caribbean as an exceptionally regrettable departure from the consensual approach employed by the three European institutions. Parliament deplored the Commission's failure to take proper account of the recommendations made in its evaluation report.

Whilst it endorsed the Commission's analysis that cooperation between the two regions has not thus far been accompanied by proper political dialogue, and welcomed the planned involvement of the French overseas departments in the region and the Caribbean overseas countries and territories (OCTs) in the future political dialogue, it called on the Commission to ensure that EPAs are structured in a way which takes into account regional realities. Any commitments undertaken within the framework of the EPA negotiations must be carefully sequenced with the delivery of EPA-related development support which targeted the main areas of concern to the governments concerned, including economic restructuring to enhance competitiveness, fiscal adjustment and trade facilitation support.

Parliament went on to state that the compensation and adjustment programmes to cushion the impact of changes in the market for sugar and bananas were under funded and, in the light of the recent demonstrations in the region, it feared that social cohesion, a cooperation objective, might be seriously undermined. The Commission was asked to develop programmes to encourage agricultural conversion with a view to safeguarding and creating acceptable jobs in farms currently run along conventional and uncompetitive lines.

Parliament shared the Commission's concerns that, as a result of global climate change, the frequency and intensity of weather-related disasters in the region would increase even further. It deplored the lack of any reference to the EU-ACP natural disaster facility established in 2005. The Commission should support the permanent long-term establishment of such a facility, and Parliament asked the Commission to provide regular follow-up on this process.

It criticised the fact that the strategy for the Caribbean pays far too little attention to the task of dealing with the problem of youth unemployment and the growing frustration among young people. Over 60% of the region's population is under 30 years of age. There was concern that the impending crisis in the Caribbean farming industry would serve to exacerbate this situation.

Parliament emphasised the key role which the development of sustainable tourism could play as a force for economic development and advocated long-term financial support for the building of the requisite infrastructure (roads, ports, airports, etc.). It drew attention, however, to the Commission's failure to acknowledge that local ownership of tourist amenities was fundamental to that sustainability and must be encouraged in order to reduce the outflow of profits to ensure that local people were not forced into roles as menial workers and to prevent the ultimate destruction of landscapes.

It welcomed the Commission's offer to keep the door open for political dialogue with Cuba, but was critical of the tight restrictions imposed on any such dialogue on the basis of the 1996 Common Position. Successful representations by the EU to the USA resulting in a lifting of the embargo policy could have substantial economic benefits for the entire region. In keeping with a policy based on respect for political, social, individual and economic human rights, Parliament urged the opening of a critical dialogue with the Cuban Government. It also emphasised the importance of coordinating development programmes with non-European players in the region, in particular Canada, China, Brazil and Venezuela. Parliament regretted the fact that the Commission's portrayal of the involvement of other players was characterised by a degree of mistrust.

Finally, Parliament drew particular attention to Haiti's desperate plight and called for a special programme for Haiti which went beyond the scope of general cooperation with the Caribbean region and for which additional resources would be required.