



Procedure file

Basic information	
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2222(INI)
EU/Central American countries: negotiating mandate for an association agreement	Procedure completed
Subject	
6.40.10 Relations with Latin America, Central America, Caribbean islands	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs		
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	DEVE Development		11/07/2006
		PSE MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ Miguel Angel	
	INTA International Trade		12/09/2006
		ALDE SUSTA Gianluca	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	External Relations	FERRERO-WALDNER Benita	

Key events			
04/07/2006	Non-legislative basic document published	B6-0417/2006	Summary
28/09/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/01/2007	Vote in committee		Summary
05/02/2007	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0026/2007	
14/03/2007	Debate in Parliament		
15/03/2007	Results of vote in Parliament		
15/03/2007	Decision by Parliament	T6-0079/2007	Summary
15/03/2007	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2222(INI)

Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 134o-p3
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/6/40358

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		B6-0417/2006	04/07/2006	EP	Summary
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE378.631	07/11/2006	EP	
Committee draft report		PE378.776	22/11/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	INTA	PE378.851	20/12/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE382.472	20/12/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0026/2007	05/02/2007	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0079/2007	15/03/2007	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2007)1901/2	03/05/2007	EC	

EU/Central American countries: negotiating mandate for an association agreement

Mr Willy MEYER PLEITE (GUE/NGL, Spain) submitted, on behalf of the GUE/NGL group and pursuant to Rule 114(1) of the Rules of Procedure, a proposal for a recommendation on the guidelines for the negotiation of an Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America.

He addressed the following recommendations to the Council:

- § that the negotiating mandate should expressly include the legal base upon which the new Association Agreement is to be negotiated; that base should be Article 310 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, in conjunction with the first sentence of the first paragraph of Article 300(2) and the second paragraph of Article 300(3);
- § that the negotiating guidelines should contain provision for the mechanisms required to ensure that the terms of the future Agreement are in perfect accordance with the EU Treaty mandate, pursuant to which the promotion of international cooperation, the development and consolidation of democracy and constitutional government and the upholding of human rights are basic CFSP objectives;
- § that the negotiating guidelines should include guidance concerning the best way of cooperating closely and jointly in order to promote effective multilateralism and increase the UN's ability to maintain and consolidate peace, and of jointly addressing the threats to peace and security (including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism) within a multilateral framework, as was decided in Vienna;
- § that the negotiating guidelines should provide for progressive access to European markets for Central American products under competitive terms and conditions, so as to prevent the Agreement from aggravating existing asymmetries; that the guidelines should therefore provide for special, variable and flexible treatment as regards the timetable to be established, on the basis of the commitments and the improvements in the competitiveness achieved by the Central American countries as a result of EU support measures such as technology transfer, the inclusion of requirements for home-country content in rules on origin, and the drawing up of cooperation and technical-assistance programmes;
- § that in order to ensure that the inclusion in the Association Agreement of the democracy clause or other social or environmental clauses is more than just an expression of good intentions, the new negotiating directives should refer specifically to the practical means which will enable such clauses to be invoked and should provide in particular for an annual report to be submitted to the European Parliament on the Commission's monitoring activities in this area;
- § that specific references should be included to the structured involvement of civil society in the new political dialogue through the holding of periodic conferences with representatives of civil society in both the EU and Central America, the granting to those representatives of observer status at interministerial meetings and the taking of action to facilitate the representatives' active involvement in appropriate sectoral forums, committees and subcommittees at all stages in the discussion, negotiation and monitoring of the process;
- § that the Commission should provide Parliament with exhaustive (and if necessary confidential) information concerning its recommendations as regards the negotiating mandate.

EU/Central American countries: negotiating mandate for an association agreement

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Willy MEYER PLEITE (GUE/NGL, ES) containing a recommendation to the Council on the negotiating mandate for an association agreement between the EU and the countries of Central America. The committee stressed the need for the agreement to be "a political and economic partnership with the region and its various countries which takes into account the asymmetry and inequalities between the two regions and amongst the various Central American countries, and which therefore includes key provisions on cooperation, development and social cohesion". The main points of the recommendation were as follows:

- the legal basis on which the new association agreement is to be negotiated should include Article 300(3), second subparagraph (under which the European Parliament must give its assent to the agreement);
- the negotiating mandate should specify that the objective of the Association Agreement includes "the gradual liberalisation of trade in conditions of fairness and mutual benefit based on complementarity and solidarity";
- specific references should be included to "the appropriate structured involvement of civil society in the new political dialogue";
- as in the case of the agreement with the Andean Community (see [INI/2006/2221](#)), a democracy clause must be included in the mandate, together with "mechanisms to safeguard the continuity of the system of employment and environmental incentives under the scheme of generalised preferences" including the GSP Plus scheme, by means of clauses of a social or environmental nature. The mandate should make "express reference" to the practical mechanisms that will enable such clauses to be invoked, and should provide for an annual report to Parliament on the follow-up carried out by the Commission in this area;
- support for regional integration should be included among the aims of the forthcoming mandate for the European Investment Bank's operation in Latin America, so that the EIB's activity effectively complements the new Agreement;
- support should be given to the efforts of the countries of Central America to counter the illegal production of and trade in drugs, for example by helping to market alternative crops introduced by farmers with the help of aid programmes;
- lastly, the mandate should not include "any express or tacit subordination making conclusion of the future EU-Central America Agreement conditional on prior completion of the round of negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO)".

EU/Central American countries: negotiating mandate for an association agreement

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Willy MEYER PLEITE (GUE/NGL, ES) containing a recommendation to the Council on the negotiating mandate for an association agreement between the EU and the countries of Central America. The report was adopted by 472 votes in favour to 30 against with 75 abstentions. It stated that the agreement must reflect the firm belief that the relationship with Central America implies a political and economic partnership which takes into account the asymmetry and inequalities between the two regions and amongst the various Central American countries, and which therefore includes key provisions on development cooperation and social cohesion and will strive to bring about free trade. The main points of the recommendation were as follows:

- the legal basis on which the new association agreement is to be negotiated should include Article 300(3), second subparagraph (under which the European Parliament must give its assent to the agreement);
- the negotiating mandate should specify that the objective of the Association Agreement includes the gradual liberalisation of trade in conditions of fairness and mutual benefit based on complementarity and solidarity;
- it should propose specific action for adopting common positions in international fora and at the United Nations in such a way as to achieve a genuine international political consensus between the two regions;
- there should be included specific references in the negotiating guidelines to the appropriate involvement of civil society in the new political dialogue, by proposing the holding of periodic conferences with representatives of civil society in both the EU and Central America;
- include the aims of supporting regional integration among the aims of the forthcoming mandate for the European Investment Bank's operations in Latin America, so that the Bank's activity effectively complements the new agreement;
- the EU must work with the countries of Central America to support their efforts to counter the illegal production and trade in drugs. Part of those activities should involve extending aid programmes to farmers for introducing alternative crops, the marketing of which the EU could help effectively to ensure;
- the guidelines for the Association Agreement mandate, as in the case of the agreement with the Andean Community (see [INI/2006/2221](#)), must ensure the inclusion of the democracy clause and establish mechanisms to safeguard the continuity of the system of employment and environmental incentives under the scheme of generalised preferences (GSP), including the GSP Plus scheme. The mandate should make express reference to the practical mechanisms that will enable such clauses to be invoked, and should provide for an annual report to Parliament on the follow-up carried out by the Commission in this area;
- the Association Agreement between the EU and Central America should be based on achieving the MDGs and also on the fight to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, which the EU has set as priorities for cooperation;

Lastly, the mandate should not include any express or tacit subordination making conclusion of the future EU-Central America agreement conditional on prior completion of the round of negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO).