

Resolution on the Economic Partnership Agreement between the Cariforum States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part

2008/2671(RSP) - 25/03/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 23 March 2009, the European Parliament adopted by 568 votes to 94 with 15 abstentions a resolution on the Economic Partnership Agreement between the Cariforum States, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other part. The resolution was tabled on behalf of the Committee on International Trade.

Parliament stresses that EPAs cannot be regarded as satisfactory unless they achieve the following objectives: offering the ACP countries support for sustainable development, promoting their participation in world trade, strengthening the regionalisation process, revitalising trade between the EU and ACP countries and promoting the economic diversification of ACP countries. The EPA must be supportive of the development objectives, policies and priorities of the Cariforum States, and should contribute to the achievement of the MDGs.

Members call on the Commission to clarify its stance on the stated EU objective of discouraging existing tax havens. They recall in this regard that eight out of the 14 Cariforum signatory states of the EPA are listed as tax havens by the OECD and that the Cariforum EPA provides for current account liberalisation for all residents, capital account liberalisation for investors, and almost unlimited cross-border activity of financial services, including the operation of "trust services" and "over-the-counter" trading of derivatives.

Parliament also made the following points:

- it is convinced that comprehensive EPAs should be complementary to an agreement on the DDA and not an alternative for ACP countries;
- it highlights the importance of intra-regional trade and the need for increased regional trade links in order for sustainable growth to be ensured in the region;
- the interests of the outermost regions have not been sufficiently taken into account in respect of many aspects that were communicated to the Commission by the regional councils, and in consequence short-term inclusion of the outermost regions in interregional trade has been neglected;
- it encourages further lowering of tariffs between developing countries and regional groups, which today account for 15% to 25% percent of the trade value, to further promote south - south trade, economic growth and regional integration;
- the implementation of the Agreement must pay due regard to the integration processes in Cariforum, including the aims and objectives of the Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) as outlined in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas;
- the Commission should clarify the actual distribution of funds throughout the ACP region arising from the pledged priority spending within the increased Aid for Trade budget;
- it calls on the ACP to propose the necessary additional EPA-related funds, particularly with regard to regulatory frameworks, safeguard measures, trade facilitation, support in meeting international sanitary and phytosanitary and intellectual property standards and the composition of the EPA monitoring mechanism;
- on the EU Strategy on Aid for Trade, with the commitment to increase the collective EU trade-related assistance to EUR 2 billion (2 000 000 000) annually by 2010 (EUR 1 billion from the Community, EUR 1 billion from the Member States), Parliament insists that the Cariforum States receive an appropriate and equitable share;
- the Commission should clarify which funds are additional to the funding of the 10th European Development Fund;
- if necessary, substantial changes to rules of origin should accompany the duty-free, quota-free (DFQF) initiative to produce a significant increase in goods exports;
- the Commission should report regularly to Parliament on the extent of patent applications and litigation under the Patent cooperation Treaty. Parliament urges the Commission not to seek to harmonise intellectual property rights standards upwards beyond what is appropriate for the level of development of the Cariforum States, and to ensure that the provisions regarding enforcement of intellectual property rights will not be used to thwart legitimate competition from generic pharmaceutical suppliers and/or to prevent government purchasing entities from acquiring generic supplies;
- the Commission should support the establishment of an independent monitoring mechanism within the Cariforum States endowed with the necessary resources to undertake the analysis necessary to determine the extent to which the EPA is achieving its objectives;
- Parliament stresses the need for the implementation of the EPAs to involve an appropriate monitoring system;
- it highlights the crucial role of Cariforum parliaments and non-state actors in the monitoring and management of the EPA;
- the European Council is asked to consult the regional councils of the outermost regions in the Caribbean (Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana) prior to ratification of the EPA between the Cariforum States and the Member States of the EU;

Lastly, Members call for Parliament and the Cariforum parliaments to be involved in any revision of the EPA.

This resolution should be read in parallel with the EU-CARIFORUM stepping-stone Economic Partnership Agreement which is the subject of a separate assent procedure (see [AVC/2008/0061](#)).