

Wednesday, 11 July 2007 - Strasbourg

Democratic scrutiny under the Development Cooperation Instrument (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) For the first time, within the scope of this new instrument, Parliament has played a scrutinising role with regard to national strategies. I consider the dialogue between Parliament and the Commission to have been very constructive and feel that it should serve as a model for further possible and desirable collaboration, as in the case of the ACP countries. However, there is still room for improvement in the cooperation between the two institutions, namely with regard to data sharing.

Parliament considers it very important to receive clarification on the way in which the various national strategies, as a whole, can contribute to the financial commitment to allocate 20% of available funds to basic healthcare and education. With regard to the priorities indicated in various national strategy documents, I regret that, generally speaking, there is not greater investment in the Millennium Development Goals. The aim of this financial instrument is to combat poverty, in particular by achieving these goals. A number of national strategy documents include activities relating to trade, higher education, civil aviation and even the promotion of the EU in receiving countries.

Parliament understands the importance of some of these actions particularly for the authorities of the countries in question. I believe, however, that our priority, and that of the Commission, should be the activities that are directly related to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which have a far more direct impact on the fight against poverty. These should be the priority. They cannot be omitted, as happens in some cases.

I would point out that Parliament has not received answers to all the questions put to the Commission during this process. I am sure that they will be forthcoming, as indeed we have been informed today by the Commissioner, and for which I thank her.

I am sorry to see Mr van den Berg go, as you mentioned, Madam President. Nobody is irreplaceable, but there are people who are more easily replaceable than others. That is certainly not the case with Max! We Socialists, in particular, will miss him a lot.