

Wednesday, 12 October 2005 - Brussels

EU policy on Africa

Ana Gomes (PSE). - (PT) Ceuta and Melilla demonstrate that, regardless of the rhetoric, Europe's strategy towards Africa is failing. This is not a problem just for Spain and Morocco, and nor must it be seen purely from the perspective of controlling illegal migration. This is a problem for the entire Union and undermines our credibility on the issue of human rights.

I welcome the words of Mr Michel, who rightly said that what we need is a coherent strategy for Africa; a strategy that enhances the effectiveness of our development policy and enables us to fulfil the Millennium Goals. If this strategy is to be achieved, it must be properly catered for in the Union's budget, the Commission and the Member States must work more closely together, fair trade must be promoted and, in turn, the common agricultural policy must be reviewed, in light of the devastating impact that it has had on developing countries. It entails combating corruption, and that is something that must work both ways.

We need a strategy that puts the EU at the forefront of implementing the new concept of the responsibility to protect, which enhances the Union's ability to maintain and build peace, in conjunction with the African Union. An integral part of this strategy is fighting against the impunity of those responsible for crimes against humanity, by making use of the International Criminal Court and other courts. There are impending test cases such as those of Hissène Habré, Charles Taylor and the perpetrators of Darfur.

We need a Union that provides more practical support for electoral processes, civil society, NGOs, democratic institutions, the empowerment of women and good governance in Africa. Lastly, we need a European Union that promotes worldwide peace and security, and that stops terrorism in its tracks in Africa. The underlying causes of terrorism must be addressed, along with, once and for all, arms proliferation in the African continent, that is, arms exports from Europe as well as from elsewhere, which are fuelling the conflicts that are destroying Africa.

Ceuta, Melilla and Lampedusa raise serious questions about security in Africa and our security. The migrants and refugees who are fleeing are doing so because they are desperate, and they are desperate partly due to Europe's silence and intransigence, the conflict in Western Sahara being a case in point. This is the same despair and anger that fans the flames of international terrorism, whose recruits manage to find a way into Europe, however high the continent builds the walls at its borders.