

Wednesday, 17 January 2007 - Strasbourg

Amendment of the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) I too should like to congratulate you, Madam President. I also wish to congratulate Mr Ribeiro e Castro on his report and on the positive developments evidenced by this revision. I wish to highlight the support for the International Criminal Court and reference to the Millennium Development Goals, without which there could not be a development strategy. Furthermore, I should like to highlight the importance of the new cooperation clause on combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, an area in which the EU must do more in terms of close collaboration and technical assistance. We must also do more on the proliferation of small arms, which are the biggest killers in our partner countries.

I must also admit to feeling a degree of frustration as regards EU-ACP relations in seeing our counterparts from some ACP countries in the Joint Parliamentary Assembly convey the official positions of their governments uncritically. We must clearly do more to strengthen national parliaments and their capacity to scrutinise the national budgets, and their budgets for cooperation and for fighting corruption.

For its part, the EU must stop overlooking, and start using, the clauses laid down in this agreement aimed at urging signatory governments to put an end to serious violations of human rights and of the most fundamental principles of democracy and good governance. I join those MEPs who called on the Commission to involve Parliament in scrutinising cooperation policy with ACP countries.