

23 March 2009

One year after Lisbon: the EU-Africa partnership at work (debate)

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) I want to congratulate Mrs Martens on this important report and point out how vital this Parliament's role is in monitoring the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the respective Action Plan.

Some important steps have been taken with regard to several of the eight partnerships involved in the strategy, particularly the establishment of joint expert groups and implementation teams and the commencement of dialogue in the context of these partnerships.

However, I regret that, by the end of the first year, some partnerships are still in the process of defining working methods and have not yet established deliverables, timetables or budget allocations.

I hope that the next joint annual progress report will be much more specific than the first in its presentation of the results and in its indication of the financial envelopes. It is particularly important that we are vigilant in terms of honouring the commitments made by the European Union and its Member States with a view to selecting the Millennium Development Goals. We must also ensure that the global recession, which is affecting everyone, does not disproportionately penalise the countries and peoples of Africa, given that they are already the most vulnerable.

Development and democratic governance in Africa must form part of the crisis exit strategy for all of us. In this respect, we also need to see more significant progress in all the partnerships, including those which are politically more sensitive, as is the case with governance and human rights.

The European Parliament's role in this process must be reinforced by officially giving it monitoring functions and involving it in the work of the strategy implementation teams. It is also vital to ensure the involvement in this process of actors representing both European and African civil societies, particularly national parliaments, NGOs and the media.