

Press release – EU agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries at risk



Ahead of a meeting to conclude negotiations on the new EU partnership agreement (Post-Cotonou) with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), the Chair of the Committee on Development, Tomas Tobé (EPP, SE) and Carlos Zorrinho (S&D, PT), Chair of Parliament's ACP Delegation, told the Commission that the current negotiation draft is not acceptable. The two Chairs warned that Parliament would not give its consent to the new Post-Cotonou agreement if greater parliamentary scrutiny and democratic control were not included.

Quotes:

"We are sending a clear message to the Commission: a parliamentary dimension with a real consultative role for the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) as well as at a regional level is a non-negotiable condition for the European Parliament in order to give its consent to a new Agreement", said [Tomas Tobé \(EPP, Sweden\)](#), Chair of the Committee on Development.

"The Commission should come forward with a new text that incorporates a strengthened parliamentary dimension, with clearly identified functions and powers for the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, safeguarding its legal and operational autonomy", said [Carlos Zorrinho \(S&D, PT\)](#), Chair of the European Parliament ACP Delegation.

For the two Chairs, the current text falls far short of these conditions. Parliament cannot accept that this important instrument of the EU's external relations would undo the progress made over the last decades in terms of parliamentary scrutiny and parliamentary diplomacy. This position also has the backing of the ACP countries.

The consent of Parliament is required under EU law for the international agreement to come into effect.

Background:

Twenty years after its initial conclusion, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the EU and 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries should have expired in February 2020, but has been extended until December 2021 as negotiations on a successor Agreement have taken longer than planned. The ACP-EU framework is the most comprehensive partnership between the EU and third countries and a key foundation of EU development cooperation and external relations.

The European Parliament strongly supports a deepened and continued ACP-EU partnership that is legally binding and with joint institutions, including the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, while also supporting regionalisation in order to enhance the partnership with Africa. Parliament's position is outlined in three resolutions of [2019](#), [2018](#) and [2016](#).