

ACP Sugar Group welcomes EP Vote on Agriculture and International Trade

ACP Sugar Group welcomes EP Vote on Agriculture and International Trade

ACP Press Release: 11 March 2011 -- The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Sugar Group has welcomed the adoption of the European Parliament's report on "Agriculture and International Trade" at its plenary session in Strasbourg on 8th March 2011.

Speaking on behalf of the Group, H.E. Dr. Patrick Gomes, Ambassador of Guyana in welcoming the report has urged the Commission and the EU Council and Member States to fulfill their obligations to the ACP sugar supplying States under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the Everything But Arms (EBA) Initiative, adding that the ACP Group would be ready to enter into any meaningful dialogue.

He added that the ACP sugar suppliers are an integral part of the EU market.

"We strongly support the resolution and call on the European Commission to abide by the EU's commitments to the ACP sugar supplying States under the EPAs and the EBA Initiative and, thus, to end the systematic concessions on sugar in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations which may upset the market balance. Any additional bilateral EU sugar market access concessions granted to third countries also risk destabilizing the EU sugar market, thereby causing preference erosion for LDCs and ACP countries. This would also undermine a fundamental pillar of mutually agreed developmental goals enshrined in the EPAs and the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement," Dr Gomes said in a statement released today in Brussels.

The ACP Sugar Group also endorses the need for consistency and coherence in EU policies on agriculture, trade and development.

The ACP sugar exporting countries have already experienced significant cuts in EU prices, and consequent loss in vital export earnings, resulting from the 2006 EU sugar regime reforms and the ending of the EU-ACP Sugar Protocol arrangements in 2009.

In order to adjust to the new policy and market conditions, they are implementing restructuring plans, with the assistance of the EU in order to modernize and transform their sugar-cane sectors with a view to ensuring their long-term viability and sustainability. This is important because of the multi-functional role which the sugar-cane industry continues to play in the ACP States. The maintenance of the ACP sugar-cane industries is critical to cope with the adverse effects of climate change.

According to Ambassador Gomes, the structural transformation plans, which have involved substantial private and public sector investment, are based on the guarantee of stable and remunerative sugar prices in a managed and balanced EU market. The continual increase in the supply of sugar to the EU under third-country FTAs will affect the successful implementation of these plans.

The Resolution adopted by the European Parliament provides a welcome recognition of the need for continued EU assurances that the objectives of the on-going restructuring efforts will not be sacrificed by Commission trade initiatives in providing increasing levels of TRQs in bilateral and regional FTAs with third countries.

The report also provides appropriate guidance to the EU Council and to the Commission as regards the current CAP reform exercise.

Tags: [Press releases](#) ^[1]

Source URL: <http://acp.int/content/acp-sugar-group-welcomes-ep-vote-agriculture-and-international-trade-0>

Links:

[1] <http://acp.int/category/story-type/press-releases>