

## NEWS: MEP urges 'frank discussion' in JPAs on sexual violence in Africa

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Strasbourg, 15 November 2011/ BBC: Labour MEP Michael Cashman has called for a "frank and robust discussion" on the policies of certain African, Caribbean and Pacific countries on discrimination on the grounds of sexuality.

([Watch the BBC Democracy Live recording of the debate](#) <sup>[1]</sup>)

He spoke during a debate on 15 November 2011 on the annual report of the ACP-EU joint parliamentary assembly.

The ACP represents 78 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific and has a joint assembly with the European Parliament for one week twice a year.

Much of the discussions in the JPA focuses on human rights and trade.

Mr Cashman criticised the fact that sexual violence in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo was only briefly debated.

"The EU will stand up for the values of non-discrimination and we will not back down", he told MEPs.

The joint assembly is co-chaired by French MEP Louis Michel and David Matongo from Zambia.

The annual report sets out the workings of the joint parliamentary assembly in 2010, which had full plenary sessions in Tenerife and Kinshasa.

The report's author, Polish centre-right MEP Filip Kaczmarek, described the joint assembly as "an irreplaceable part of co-operation between the north and the south".

However he criticised the fact that the European Council - which represents national governments in the EU - did not send a representative to the Kinshasa meeting and called for the Council and the Commission to clarify their role in relations with ACP countries.

The report welcomes the "increasingly political nature" of the ACP, for passing resolutions on issues such as trade, and the situation in Haiti following the country's devastating earthquake.

But Belgian green MEP Isabelle Durant said it needed more powers, such as on economic development, to avoid being "just a talking shop".

The report was voted on at the daily [voting session](#) <sup>[2]</sup> from 11am on 16 November 2011.

*Read Democracy Live's guide to how the plenary sessions work [here](#).* <sup>[3]</sup>

*The European Parliament's disclaimer on the use of simultaneous interpretations can be found [here](#).* <sup>[4]</sup>

*Picture: Screenshot, BBC Democracy Live*

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