

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0047/09  
pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Helmuth Markov and Erika Mann, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade  
to the Council

Subject: The stepping stone Economic Partnership Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and Côte d'Ivoire, of the other part

1. Can the Council update the European Parliament on the expected dates for conclusion of a "full" EPA with the West Africa region?
2. Does the Council expect the signing of a comprehensive agreement to further promote economic growth, development and good governance in Ivory Coast and in the region of West Africa as a whole?
3. Are there any specific interests being taken into account regarding this region in the negotiations and how would this "full" EPA differ from the CARIFORUM agreement?
4. Will the Council undertake to provide adequate administrative and technical assistance to the Ivory Coast, including its private sector, in order to facilitate the transition of its economy following the signing of the interim Economic Partnership Agreement?
5. Will the Council make Ivory Coast's inclusion in a "full" EPA dependent on there being an accountable and democratically elected government in place in that country?
6. Can the Council explain how it evaluates the following aspects with regard to the EU-Cote d'Ivoire EPA:
  - (i) Are stronger rules for the protection of infant industries needed and/or ensured?
  - (ii) Will IPR be negotiated in such a way that not only European/international IPR are protected, but traditional knowledge as well?
  - (iii) Is there a need to shape government procurement rules according to Côte d'Ivoire-specific needs?
  - (iv) How far are the conditions for "working visas" for Côte d'Ivoire nationals worked out? Will they cover a period of 24 months? What kind of professions will be covered?
7. Can the Council support a request to consult the Parliament before taking a decision on the provisional application of international agreements – as is the case for the EPAs – when the assent procedure is required, to build political understanding for the assent procedure?
8. Can the Council explain how it will assess the political situation of Côte d'Ivoire with regard either to an interim or final EPA? The political situation in Cote d'Ivoire can not be characterised by democratic standards. In the likely event that there will not be an election until either the interim or the final EPA has been ratified, how will the Council assess the situation? How will this assessment affect the other 15 West African countries with regard to benefiting from an important bi-regional trade and development Agreement?
9. Can the Council clarify the timeframe with regard to Côte d'Ivoire EPA related development assistance?

Tabled: 27.02.2009  
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