EC/Morocco Euro-Mediterranean association agreement

1995/0363(AVC) - 24/07/2008 - Follow-up document

PURPOSE: to implement Article 84 of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Morocco, of the other part, in order to set up a customs cooperation committee and amend the rules of procedure of certain sub-committees and working groups of the Association Committee.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

CONTENT: in March 2000, the EU-Morocco Association Agreement came into force. The Agreement includes the setting up of seven sub-committees on: internal market, industry, trade and services, transport, environment and energy, research and innovation, agriculture and fisheries, justice and security, and human rights, democratisation and governance. The Agreement also provides for the establishment of a customs cooperation committee, a working party on social matters and migration and an economic dialogue.

However, in 2005 an amendment to Protocol 4 of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement concerning the definition of “originating products and methods of administrative cooperation” resulted in the removal of any reference to the customs cooperation committee. As a result, a new legal basis for the establishment of the customs cooperation committee will need to be created.

In a further development, and within the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy approved in 2005, an Action Plan was adopted with the dual purpose of setting out concrete steps towards fulfilling the parties’ obligations as set out in the Association Agreement and to provide a broader framework for further strengthening EU-Morocco relations. Under the terms of the Actions Plan, the sub-committees (outlined above) will be responsible for implementing the plan. However, not all areas covered by the Action Plan are covered by the existing subcommittees. Steps must therefore be taken to ensure that all the subject areas are monitored by the sub-committees. This will require adjustments to the rules of procedure of the internal market, industry, trade and services, transport, environment and energy, agriculture and fisheries, and justice and security sub-committees. Decision 1/2003 of the EU-Morocco Association Council will need to be amended accordingly.

In addition, the economic dialogue established by the Association Agreement does not, as yet, have rules of procedure, unlike the other bodies. The aim of this proposal therefore is to draw up rules of procedure governing the organisation of meetings of the economic dialogue group and its remit. The operating rules of the customs cooperation committee and economic dialogue group are modelled on the procedures of the existing subcommittees. They will be chaired by the European Commission with the Member States being informed of and invited to the meetings.