EC/Albania Stabilisation and Association Agreement

2006/0044(AVC) - 26/02/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Albania.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council and Commission Decision 2009/332/EC, Euratom concerning the conclusion of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part.

CONTENT: this Decision concludes the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EC and their Member States, of the one part, and Albania, of the other part, the Annexes and Protocols annexed thereto, as well as the Declarations attached to the Final Act.

The aims of the Association are:

- to support the efforts of Albania to strengthen democracy and the rule of law,
- to contribute to political, economic and institutional stability in Albania, as well as to the stabilisation of the region,
- to provide an appropriate framework for political dialogue, allowing the development of close political relations between the Parties,
- to support the efforts of Albania to develop its economic and international cooperation, also through the approximation of its legislation to that of the Community, — to support the efforts of Albania to complete the transition into a functioning market economy, to promote harmonious economic relations and develop gradually a free trade area between the Community and Albania,
- to foster regional cooperation in all the fields covered by this Agreement.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement focuses on the following main elements:

- provision for political dialogue with Albania;
- provisions on enhanced regional co-operation, including the perspective of establishing free trade areas between the countries of the region;
- the perspective of the establishment of a free-trade area between the Community and Albania within ten years of the entry into force of the Agreement;
- provisions on the movement of workers, freedom of establishment, supply of services, current payments and movement of capital;
- the commitment by Albania to approximate its legislation to that of the EC, notably in key areas of the internal market;
- provisions on co-operation with Albania in a wide range of fields, including justice, freedom and security;
- provision for the establishment of a Stabilisation and Association Council which supervises the implementation of the Agreement, of a Stabilisation and Association Committee and a Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee.

Amongst the main general clauses on which the Agreement is based, there is the traditional clause on respect for democratic principles and human rights as well as a new clause on international and regional peace and stability, which requires the development of good neighbourly relations between Albania and its Balkan neighbours. This commitment constitutes a key factor in the development of the relations and cooperation between the Parties and thus contributes to regional stability.

The Parties also reaffirm the importance that they attach to the fight against terrorism and the implementation of international obligations in this area. The preamble to the Agreement refers to Albania' s status as a potential candidate for European Union membership on the basis of the Copenhagen criteria, subject to the successful implementation of the Agreement, notably regarding regional cooperation.

The Agreement recalls the European Union's readiness to integrate to the fullest possible extent Albania into the political and economic mainstream of Europe and its status as a potential candidate for European Union membership on the basis of the Treaty on European Union and fulfilment of the criteria defined by the European Council in June 1993, subject to the successful implementation of this Agreement, notably regarding regional cooperation.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Agreement shall enter into force when all of the necessary procedures have been completed. In the event that, pending the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement, the provisions of certain parts of this Agreement, in particular those relating to the free movement of goods as well as the relevant provisions on transport, are put into effect by means of Interim Agreements between the Community and Albania. From the date of its entry into force, this Agreement shall replace the Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Republic of Albania on trade and commercial and economic cooperation, signed at Brussels on 11 May 1992. This shall not affect any right, obligation or legal situation of the parties created through the execution of that Agreement.