

# Pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin. Regional Convention

2010/0093(NLE) - 21/04/2010 - Document attached to the procedure

**PURPOSE:** the **signature** of the regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin

**PROPOSED ACT:** Council Decision.

**BACKGROUND:** at present, the pan-Euro-Mediterranean cumulation zone includes the European Union, the EFTA States, the participants in the Barcelona Process and the Faroe Islands.

The pan-Euro-Mediterranean system of cumulation of origin is made up of a multiplicity of agreements, setting out, among other things, free trade provisions based on a network of identical rules of origin allowing for diagonal cumulation, among the countries of the zone. This cumulation zone is bound to grow in the future.

Since the implementation of the pan-Euro-Mediterranean system of cumulation, the difficulties with the management of the current system of individual protocols have increased. Any amendment to a protocol applicable between two partner countries of the pan-Euro-Mediterranean zone implies identical amendments to each and every protocol applicable within the zone. The European Commission therefore launched the idea of basing the diagonal cumulation of origin on **a single legal instrument** in the form of a regional convention on preferential rules of origin to which the individual free trade agreements applicable between the countries of the zone would refer.

It was only in 2007 that Ministers agreed to start the drafting of a single convention on preferential rules of origin for the pan-Euro-Mediterranean area in order to replace the current network of protocols on rules of origin. They also decided to include the participants in the Stabilisation and Association Process in this cumulation zone.

On 26 November 2009, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with all the parties concerned. All the negotiating directives were fulfilled.

The Commission now calls on the Council to **authorise the signature of the Convention** in the name of the European Union.

**LEGAL BASE:** Article 207(4) first subparagraph in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

**CONTENT:** this proposal relates to the authorisation of the Council to designate a person/those persons **to sign, in the name of the EU, the regional Convention** on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin.

The final text of the Convention was endorsed by the Euromed Trade Ministers at their Conference held on 9 December 2009 in Brussels. The Convention must now be signed by the negotiator on behalf of the European Union, subject to its conclusion at a later date.

For further information regarding the content of the Convention, please refer to the summary of the initial proposal (COM(2010)0172).

