EEA agreement and related agreements: participation of Bulgaria and Romania

2007/0115(NLE) - 08/11/2011 - Final act

PURPOSE: to conclude the Agreement on the participation of Bulgaria and Romania in the European Economic Area and four related Agreements.

NON LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2011/733/EU on the conclusion of an Agreement on the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania in the European Economic Area and four related agreements.

BACKGROUND: the Agreement on the participation Bulgaria and Romania in the European Economic Area and four related agreements were signed, on behalf of the European Community, on 25 July 2007, in accordance with Council Decision 2007/566/EC, subject to their conclusion at a later date.

Those Agreements should now be approved.

CONTENT : this Decision approves the following agreements on behalf of the European Union:

- Agreement on the participation of Bulgaria and Romania in the European Economic Area;
- Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Community and Norway concerning a Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Bulgaria;
- Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Community and Norway concerning a Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Romania, Additional Protocol to the Agreement between the European
- Economic Community and Iceland consequent on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union, and
- Additional Protocol to the Agreement between the European Economic Community and Norway consequent on the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union.

The main Agreement on the participation of Bulgaria and Romania in the EEA defines the amendment to the EEA Agreement, **following enlargement of the EEA**. The bulk of amendments stem from the Treaty of Accession. The arrangements for the application of Community acquis by the Acceding Countries upon accession to the EU, such as technical adaptations and transition periods, which have been agreed in the EU enlargement negotiations, are taken over from the Act of Accession in the EEA Agreement.

Aside from the technical adaptations, the EEA enlargement agreement for Bulgaria and Romania has been negotiated on the basis that any substantial modalities, notably concerning **financial contributions** and **fishing concessions**, are agreed only for a certain period t, i.e. from 1 January 2007 to 30 April 2009.

On that basis, it is provided that:

- the EEA EFTA States will provide EUR 21.5 million for Bulgaria and EUR 50.5 million for Romania through the EEA financial mechanism from 1 January 2007 to 30 April 2009, when the current financial mechanisms expire;

- Norway will provide EUR 20 million for Bulgaria and EUR 48 million for Romania as additional bilateral financial contributions over the same period.

In return, it is the Community grant Norway and Iceland a **number of concessions in the field of fisheries,** also limited in time until 30 April 2009.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the Decision enters into force on 9 November 2011. The date of entry into force of the Agreements will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.