EU/Morocco framework agreement: participation of Morocco in Union programmes. Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association EC/Morocco

2010/0125(NLE) - 08/03/2012 - Final act

PURPOSE: to **conclude** a Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement between the EU and Morocco on the general principles for the participation of Morocco in Union programmes.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2012/176/EU on the conclusion of a Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part, on a framework agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco on the general principles for the participation of the Kingdom of Morocco in Union programmes.

BACKGROUND: the gradual opening-up of certain Union programmes and agencies to the participation of ENP partner countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy is one of the many measures to promote reform, modernisation and transition in the countries neighbouring on the EU. This policy is outlined in the Commission communication on the general approach to enable ENP partner countries to participate in Community agencies and Community programmes. The Council endorsed this approach on 5 March 2007.

On the basis of that communication and those conclusions, on 18 June 2007 the Council issued directives to the Commission to negotiate Framework Agreements with Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, **Morocco**, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine on the general principles governing their participation in Community programmes.

In June 2007, it decided to start negotiations with Morocco. The Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and its Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part, on a framework agreement between the EU and Morocco on the general principles for the participation of Morocco in Union programmes was signed on behalf of the Union on 7 October 2010.

It is now necessary to conclude this Protocol on behalf of the European Union.

CONTENT: by this Decision, the Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Morocco, of the other part, on a framework agreement between the European Union and Morocco on the general principles for the participation of Morocco in Union programmes is hereby approved on behalf of the Union.

The text of the Protocol is attached to this Decision.

It concerns in particular the **general principles** for the participation of Morocco in programmes such as the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), Customs 2013, SESAR and Marco Polo. It contains standard clauses for application to all ENP partner countries with which such protocols are to be concluded.

The **specific terms and conditions**, including the financial contribution and reporting and evaluation procedures, applicable to Morocco's participation in any particular programme should be determined by agreement between the European Commission, acting on behalf of the Union, and Morocco.

The **main points** of the Protocol may be summarised as follows:

- Morocco is authorised to take part in all current and future Union programmes opened to its participation in accordance with the provisions adopting these programmes;
- it shall make a financial contribution to the general budget of the EU corresponding to its participation in specific programmes;
- the representatives of Morocco shall be allowed to take part, as observers and for the points which concern Morocco, in the management committees responsible for monitoring the programmes to which Morocco contributes financially;
- projects and initiatives submitted by participants from Morocco shall, wherever possible, be subject to the same conditions, rules and procedures for the programmes concerned as the Member States;
- the specific terms and conditions governing Morocco's participation in each programme, in particular the financial contribution payable and the reporting and evaluation procedures, shall be determined by agreement between the Commission, acting on behalf of the Union, and the competent Moroccan authorities (Memorandum of Understanding);
- financial controls, audits or other checks, including administrative investigations, will be carried out by, or under the authority of, the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office and the Court of Auditors;
- this Protocol shall apply for the period during which the EU-Morocco Euro-Mediterranean Agreement is in force.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: the negotiated text provides that the parties shall provisionally apply the provisions of the Protocol from the date of its signature. The Decision shall enter into force on 8 March 2012.