EU/Algeria Agreement: scientific and technological cooperation

2011/0175(NLE) - 25/04/2012 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to conclude an Agreement between the European Union and Algeria on cooperation in science and technology.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States and Algeria was signed on 22 April 2002. This Agreement identifies cooperation in scientific and technological research as an area of particular interest and potential and provides for the establishment of permanent links between the two parties' scientific communities.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, to which Algeria is not party but which provides a framework for relations between the European Union and its neighbours, establishes a new framework for implementing the association agreement. In line with the European Neighbourhood Policy, a strategy document for 2007-13 describes scientific research as an essential element that contributes to building a knowledge society and to reducing unemployment as the economy becomes more open.

In a letter of 30 May 2006 the Algerian authorities expressed their interest in launching negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement between the EC and Algeria on cooperation in science and technology. The negotiations resulted in the attached draft agreement text initialled on 14 October 2010.

On 16 November 2009, the Council authorised the Commission to negotiate, on behalf of the Union, an Agreement between the EU and Algeria on scientific and technological cooperation. It was initialled on 14 October 2010. The Agreement was signed on 19 March 2012, subject to its conclusion at a later date, and provisionally applied upon its signature pursuant to Article 218(5) of the Treaty.

It is now necessary to approve the Agreement on behalf of the Union.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was carried out.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 186 in conjunction with Article 218(6) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

CONTENT: with this proposal for a Decision, the Agreement between the European Union and Algeria on scientific and technological cooperation is hereby approved on behalf of the Union.

Main provisions of the Agreement may be summarised as follows:

Means of cooperation: such cooperation would promote the development and competitiveness of Algeria and the entire region and would create closer ties between the two parties, to the benefit of the European Union.

A science and technology cooperation agreement would be the most appropriate tool for reinforcing Algeria's cooperation with and participation in the framework programme and for intensifying dialogue related to science and technology.

Cooperation principles: cooperation activities shall be conducted on the basis of the following principles:

- promotion of a knowledge-based society to foster the social and economic development of both Parties;
- mutual benefit based on an overall balance of advantages;
- reciprocal access to the activities of research programmes and technological developments undertaken by each Party;
- timely exchange of information which may facilitate cooperative activities;
- appropriate exchange and protection of intellectual property rights;
- participation and funding in compliance with the relevant laws and regulations of the Parties.

Cooperation may also take the following forms: (i) regular discussions on the guidelines and priorities for research policies and planning in Algeria and the Union; (ii) discussions on cooperation, developments and future prospects; (iii) the timely provision of information concerning the implementation of programmes and research projects of Algeria and of the Union, and concerning the results of work undertaken within the framework of this Agreement; (iv) joint meetings; (v) visits and exchanges of research workers, engineers and technicians, including for training purposes; (vi) participation of experts in seminars, symposia and workshops; (vii) exchanges of information on practices, laws, regulations, and programmes relevant to cooperation under this Agreement; (viii) reciprocal access to scientific and technologic information in the framework of this cooperation; (iv) examining the possibility of cooperation in setting up incubators and nurseries and the start-up and creation of research centres, (v) promoting cooperation by means of research and development projects.

Management of the Agreement: technical measures are provided to set the framework for the management of the Agreement (particularly the establishment of a Joint Cooperation Committee).

Financing: provisions are also provided as regards the financing of the research activities.

Dissemination and use of the results and information: lastly, the dissemination and the use of the results and information obtained and/or exchanged and the management, allocation and exercise of intellectual property rights resulting from the research activities undertaken under this Agreement shall be subject to the conditions provided for in the Annex.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: this proposal has no implications for the EU budget.