EU/Armenia framework agreement: general principles for the participation of Armenia in Union programmes. Protocol to the EC/Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

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PURPOSE: the conclusion of a Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Armenia in Union programmes.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the gradual opening-up of certain Union programmes and agencies to the participation of European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries represents one of many measures to promote reform, modernisation and transition in the European Union's neighbourhood. This policy aspect is described more extensively in the Commission's Communication "on the general approach to enable European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries to participate in Community agencies and Community programmes". The Council endorsed this approach in its conclusions on 5 March 2007.

Based upon this Communication and those conclusions, the Council, on 18 June 2007, 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 for their participation in Community programmes. A number of protocols were then signed with some of these countries.

In April 2012, Armenia expressed its interest to participate in the broad range of programmes open to partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The text of the Protocol negotiated with Armenia is the subject of this proposal and is attached in the annex. It is now appropriate to conclude this Protocol on behalf of the European Union.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was undertaken.

LEGAL BASIS: Articles 114, 168, 169, 172, 173(3), 188 and 192 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a) thereof.

CONTENT: the Commission presents a proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of a Protocol containing a Framework Agreement on the general principles for the participation of Armenia in Union programmes. It contains standard stipulations that are intended to be applied to all European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries with which such protocols are to be concluded.

The Protocol sets down, in particular, the specific terms and conditions regarding the participation of Armenia in each particular programme, in particular the financial contribution payable and reporting and evaluation procedures which shall be determined in the context of an agreement between the European Commission, on behalf of the Union, and Armenia.

The negotiated text also envisages that the Parties apply the Protocol's provisions provisionally from the date of its signature.

According to 218(6)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Parliament shall be requested to give its consent to the conclusion of this Protocol. In parallel, the Commission submits a proposal for a Council Decision on the signature of the said Protocol.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the proposal has no impact on the EU's budget. Armenia **shall contribute financially to the Union's budget** according to the specific programmes in which it participates. To finance its participation, Armenia may request assistance under the Regulation laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument or under any other similar Regulation governing Union external assistance in favour of Armenia.