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

2013/0257(NLE) - 22/07/2013 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: to conclude a Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia of the other part, concerning the participation of Georgia in Union programmes.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the gradual opening-up of certain Union programmes and agencies to the participation of ENP partner countries represents one of many measures to promote reform, modernisation and transition in the European Union's neighbourhood. The Commission outlined this policy aspect more extensively in its 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 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.

The Joint Communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy "A new response to a changing Neighbourhood", endorsed by Council Conclusions on 20 June 2011, further stressed the EU's intention to facilitate partner countries' participation in EU programmes.

In December 2012, Georgia expressed its interest to participate in the broad range of programmes open to partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The Council is invited to adopt the following proposed Decision.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was undertaken.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 212, in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: the Commission presents a proposal concerning the Council Decision concerning the conclusion of a Protocol containing a Framework Agreement between the European Union and Georgia on the general principles for the participation of Georgia in Union programmes.

This Protocol contains a Framework Agreement on the general principles for the participation of Georgia 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.

It also details specific terms and conditions, in particular, the financial contribution and reporting and evaluation procedures, regarding the participation of Georgia in each particular programme should be determined in an agreement between the European Commission and the competent authorities of Georgia.

Pending its entry into force, the Parties agree to provisionally apply this Protocol from the date of its signature, pending its conclusion at a later date.

According to Article 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 and provisional application of the said Protocol.

The text of the Protocol is attached to this Decision.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: the proposal has no implication for the EU budget. Georgia shall **contribute financially to the general budget of the European Union** corresponding to the specific programmes in which Georgia participates.

To finance its participation, the country may request assistance under the Regulation establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument or pursuant to any similar Regulation providing for external assistance of the Union to Georgia.