

EU/Morocco Cooperation Agreement: Civil Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)

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PURPOSE: to conclude a Cooperation Agreement on a Civil Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) between the European Community and its Member States and Morocco.

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: the European Commission, on the basis of a negotiating mandate from the Council, conducted negotiations and initialled the agreement with the Moroccan authorities on 8 November 2005 with a view to authorising this country to participate in the Galileo Programme. The agreement was signed on 12 December 2006, pursuant to a Council Decision authorising signature of 27 November 2006.

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

CONTENT: this proposal calls on the Council to conclude the Cooperation Agreement on a Civil Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) between the European Community and its Member States and Morocco.

Aim: the aim of the Agreement to be approved is to strengthen cooperation with Morocco in the field of satellite navigation. This Agreement allows for closer cooperation with Morocco in the area of satellite navigation. It will implement a number of elements of the European satellite navigation programmes.

Reason for the Agreement: Morocco has know-how in space technology and applications. It would like to develop the use of satellite radionavigation on its territory and in the surrounding region (western Mediterranean and West Africa), focusing on applications specific to this region. Moroccan and European firms have had industrial cooperation links in the space sector for several years, providing a solid foundation on which to build and extend cooperation in this field which is of great importance for both parties.

Sector cooperation: the sectors for cooperation in satellite navigation and timing envisaged by the agreement are:

- scientific research,
- industrial manufacturing,
- training, application,
- service and market development, trade,
- radio-spectrum issues,
- integrity issues,
- standardisation and certification.

The agreement is expected to reinforce the joint activities in these sectors to the benefit of the citizens, industries and the scientific communities of the parties

Territorial provisions: Bulgaria and Romania are to become parties to the agreement by the conclusion of a protocol in accordance with Art 6(2) of the Act concerning the conditions of accession of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania and the adjustments to the treaties on which the European Union is founded.

Croatia shall also become a party in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Treaty.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the Agreement has no financial impact on the EU budget.