EU/Tunisia Framework Agreement: participation of Tunisia in Union programmes. Protocol to the EC/Tunisia Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement

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PURPOSE: the conclusion of a Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and Tunisia, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and Tunisia on the general principles for the participation of that country 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 it.

BACKGROUND: as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the gradual opening up of certain European Union programmes and agencies to ENP partner countries is one of many measures to promote reform, modernisation and transition in the European Union's neighbourhood. The Commission has expanded on this 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.

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. To date, Protocols have been signed with Armenia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco and Ukraine.

In December 2013, Tunisia expressed its interest in participating in the broad range of programmes open to partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The text of the Protocol negotiated with Tunisia is attached and the subject of this proposal. It is now appropriate for the European Union to conclude the protocol.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 212 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a) and Article 218(7) thereof.

CONTENT: this is a proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of the Protocol. This Protocol contains a Framework Agreement on the general principles for the participation of Tunisia in Union programmes. It contains standard conditions that should be applied to all European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries with whom such protocols are to be concluded.

Objectives: the protocol seeks to define the financial and technical rules permitting Tunisia to participate in certain EU programmes.

The horizontal framework established by the Protocol sets out principles for economic, financial and technical cooperation measure and allows Tunisia to **receive technical assistance**, in particular financial assistance, from the European Union pursuant to the European Union programmes.