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

2014/0118(NLE) - 17/09/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Foreign Affairs adopted the report by Pier Antonio PANZERI (S&D, IT) on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Protocol to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part, on a Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Tunisia on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Tunisia in Union programmes.

The committee recommended that Parliament **gave its consent to the conclusion of the Protocol.**

It justified its recommendation by noting that Tunisia was the birthplace of the Arab Spring. Thus far, it was the only country in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region to survive this social and political experiment.

Over recent years, the Tunisian economy had deteriorated markedly, both domestically and in the international arena, especially in terms of its trade with Europe, which remained its main partner. In light of this, it was vital for the Tunisian issue to become an EU priority, with the EU making concrete economic and investment commitments aimed at supporting the country's fragile transition to democracy.

Bearing this in mind, the EU should also increase cooperation through programmes such as Erasmus+ other programmes aimed at developing ‘people-to-people’ contacts. Tunisia should also be given the opportunity to join the missions and activities of the European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).