EC/Israel Euro-Mediterranean association agreement

1995/0276(AVC) - 08/11/1995 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE : the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the State of Israel. This agreement replaces the cooperation agreement and the agreement on ECSC products signed in 1975. SUBSTANCE: General principles: the agreement is concluded for an unlimited period and strengthens existing links between the European Communities and their Member States and Israel by establishing relations based on reciprocity and partnership; Democracy clause: the agreement is based on respect for human rights and democratic principles. The main elements are as follows: - regular political dialogue at all levels: the main aim will be to monitor developments in Israel in respect of the peace process, security and regional cooperation. It will contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region and will foster a climate of understanding and tolerance between cultures and religions; - establishment of a free-trade zone: this will be established gradually in line with WTO rules. As regards agricultural produce, the preferential regime which currently applies to certain Israeli products imported into the European Community and to EU exports to Israel will be extended, in return for an increase in the current concessions (cut flowers, citrus fruits) and the introduction of concessions for new products. The agreement provides for concessions in the field of agricultural products and processed agricultural products. A specific clause makes provision for the trade in agricultural products to be reviewed after 01.01.2000 with a view to introducing new reciprocal concessions and achieving greater liberalisation; - the agreement includes provisions on freedom of establishment, the liberalisation of services and the free movement of capital. The Association Council EC-Israel will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the agreement within a period of 3 years from its introduction. The agreement also provides for Community rules on competition (particularly those relating to transparency), and measures for protecting intellectual, industrial and commercial property rights, to be applied to business untertakings; - economic cooperation: existing economic cooperation will be strengthened over as wide a range of activities as possible in all those areas of interest to the parties concerned and will be the subject of regular dialogue; - a level of social cooperation is provided for which will exceed the existing arrangements; regular dialogue will help implement measures relating to any subject of a social nature which is of common interest. This dialogue is to be supplemented by a programme of cultural cooperation. The agreement will be implemented by establishing an Association Council and an Association Committee with decision-making powers, which are to meet annually at Ministerial level. These measures will at the same time promote cooperation between the European Parliament and the ESC and their Israeli counterparts (the Knesset).