Mediterranean policy: follow-up to the Barcelona Conference 1995

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The Council heard an oral report from the Commission on the negotiations currently under way on new association agreements with a number of the European Union’s Mediterranean partners. The Council reiterated its commitment to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and, in view of the second meeting of Foreign Ministers to take place on 15-16 April 1997, recalled that the Barcelona Declaration underlined the importance of strengthening bilateral relations as a counterpart to the multilateral framework. In this regard, the Council underlined its determination to conclude the negotiations with Egypt , Jordan and Lebanon as soon as possible, as a further step towards the completion of the network of Euro-Mediterranean association agreements. The Council welcomed the Commission’s intention to begin negotiations with Algeria shortly and encouraged it to pursue actively its exploratory talks with Syria . The Council also welcomed the recent conclusion of negotiations with the PLO on an interim association agreement and invited the Commission to submit a formal proposal for signature as soon as possible.