

EU/Belarus agreement: partnership and cooperation agreement

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This proposal for a decision aimed to enable the conclusion of a partnership and cooperation agreement between the Community and its Member States and Belarus. It was a mixed agreement covering areas of Community and national responsibility. It was concluded for an initial period of 10 years. It established political dialogue. It also contained provisions concerning trade in goods, conditions relating to employment, establishment and the activities of companies, the cross-border provision of services, payments and capital, competition, the protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property, legislative cooperation, economic and financial cooperation and cultural cooperation. The agreement included a conditionality clause on human rights, permitting the suspension of the agreement, even on a unilateral basis, in cases of violation of its key elements, including respect for democratic principles and human rights and the principles of the market economy. The provisions relating to customs cooperation would be the subject of a separate protocol. The agreement would be managed via a three-fold structure: a cooperation council, a cooperation committee and a parliamentary cooperation committee; This agreement was drawn up in the context of the future creation of a free trade area. In 1998, the Council would assess the situation to determine whether or not the negotiations on such an area could begin. This agreement replaced the economic and trade cooperation agreement concluded between the Community and the USSR in 1989 with regard to the precise interests of Belarus. It was concluded by the Council on behalf of the Community and with the agreement of the European Parliament (in accordance with Article 228(2) and (3), second paragraph, of the TEU, which provided for the consent of the European Parliament).