EC/Tunisia Euro-Mediterranean association agreement

1995/0132(AVC) - 26/01/1998 - Final act

OBJECTIVE: to conclude a Euro-Mediterranean Assocation Agreement between the European Communities and Tunisia. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council and Commission Decision 98/238/EC, ECSC on the conclusion of a 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. SUBSTANCE: The agreement is concluded for an indefinite period. Its purpose is to strengthen the existing ties between the Communities and their Member States and Tunisia by establishing relations based on reciprocity and partnership. Democracy clause: respect for democratic principles and human rights is one of the fundamental elements of the agreement. Main elements: the agreement provides for: -the institution of regular political dialogue at all levels (including security and regional development); -the creation of a free trade area: this is to be established gradually, in accordance with WTO rules, between the Community and Tunisia over a period not exceeding 12 years from the date of entry into force of the agreement. Tunisia, which hitherto has not granted any concessions to the Community, will gradually eliminate barriers to trade affecting the Community's exports of industrial goods, and will apply preferential tariffs to its agricultural exports. The Community preferential regime currently in force (complete opening of its market to Tunisia's industrial exports and concessions for the bulk of its agricultural exports) is confirmed, but is also improved as far as agricultural products are concerned. As regards olive oil, the preferential regime has been renewed for four years. The parties will have to reconsider the situation before deciding what regime is to apply thereafter. A specific clause stipulates that the agricultural trade situation is to be reviewed from 01.01.2000 with a view to determining new reciprocal concessions and attaining greater liberalization; -provisions on freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services: the Association Council will be asked to make recommendations in this field. Meanwhile the parties will consult together with the aim of ensuring completely free movement of capital. The agreement also provides for Community competition rules to apply to Tunisian businesses; -economic cooperation: the existing economic cooperation will be stepped up on the widest possible basis and will be the subject of regular dialogue. Intra-Maghreb integration will be a particular aim. The fields of cooperation particularly include regional cooperation, education and training, scientific cooperation, environment, industrial cooperation, promotion of investment, standardization, approximation of legislation, financial services, agriculture and fisheries, transport and energy, tourism, money laundering and combating drug use and trafficking; -social cooperation: a regular dialogue will be launched on all social topics of common interest. It will also concern cultural aspects of cooperation; -financial cooperation is also provided for, using appropriate arrangements and funding. An Association Council and an Association Committee with powers of decision are to be set up to implement the agreement. Cooperation between the European Parliament and its Tunisian counterpart will also be facilitated. ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT: 01.03.1998. It will replace the cooperation agreement and the agreement on ECSC products signed in 1976.