

# EC/Mexico agreement: scientific and technological cooperation agreement

2004/0274(CNS) - 14/12/2004 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE** : to conclude an Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation with the United Mexican States.

**CONTENT** : the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and the United Mexican States (Mexico) entered into force on 1 October 2000. It identified cooperation on science and technology as an area of particular interest and potential.

The Commission has previously stressed the benefits of negotiating agreements for scientific and technological cooperation with countries with emerging economies.

Negotiations with Mexico resulted in an Agreement, initialed on 2 April 2003 in Mexico and signed on 3 February 2004. The Agreement was negotiated against the background of intensifying co-operation between Mexico and the European Union, considering the importance of science and technology for economic and social development and the mutual wish to extend and strengthen the conduct of co-operative activities in areas of common interest, as diverse as:

- research on the environment and climate, including Earth observation;
- biomedical and health research;
- agriculture, forestry and fisheries;
- industrial and manufacturing technologies;
- research on electronics, materials and metrology;
- non-nuclear energy;
- transport;
- information society technologies;
- research on economic and social development;
- biotechnologies;
- aeronautics and space research and applied research; and
- science and technology policy.

The agreement and the annexes were signed on 3 February 2004.

The Agreement is based on the principles of mutual benefit, reciprocal opportunities for access to each

other's programmes and activities relevant to the purpose of the Agreement, non-discrimination, the effective protection of intellectual property and equitable sharing of intellectual property rights. It will be concluded for an initial period of five years and may be tacitly renewed after full evaluation, based on the results, during the penultimate year of each successive five-year period.

The Agreement provides for :

- establishment of networks and long-term institutional alliances between research centres and research and technology institutes and joint implementation of projects of common interest;
- implementation of RTD projects between research and business centres in Mexico and Europe, including technology-based companies;
- participation of Mexican research institutes in RTD projects under the existing framework programme and reciprocal participation of research institutes established in the Community in Mexican projects in similar sectors of RTD. Such a participation shall be subject to the rules and procedures applicable in RTD programmes of each Party;
- visits and exchanges of scientists, RTD policy-makers and technical experts, including scientific training through research ;
- joint organisation of scientific seminars, conferences, symposia and workshops, as well as participation of experts in such activities;
- exchanges and sharing of equipment and materials including shared use and/or loans of laboratory infrastructure and equipment;
- exchanges of information on procedures, laws, regulations and programmes relevant to cooperation under this Agreement, exchanges of experience and studies on best practice on science and technology policy;
- any other form recommended by the Steering Committee and deemed in conformity with the policies and procedures applicable in both Parties;
- cooperation activities to be subject to the availability of funds and to the applicable laws and regulations, policies and programmes of Mexico and the Community; in principle, no transfer of funds will take place.

As regards dissemination and utilisation of information and management, allocation and exercise of intellectual property rights, resulting from joint research under the Agreement, they will be subject to the provisions of the annex to the Agreement entitled "Intellectual Property Rights". The principle of non-discrimination agreed under article 3 of the Agreement should protect Community participants in Mexican programmes and activities against any discriminatory treatment, also in respect of the dissemination and utilisation of results, including intellectual property rights. The Steering Committee will review the efficient

and effective functioning of the Agreement, including the non-discriminatory treatment of participants.

Closer collaboration with Mexico on science and technology will also contribute directly to strengthening ties between the two parties and will, in particular, bring substantial benefits for Europeans, by improving

the Community's position in Mexico and, consequently, within Latin America as a whole. This agreement for scientific and technological cooperation would be the appropriate instrument for expanding and supplementing current cooperation under the FP6 specific activities for international cooperation with developing countries.