EC/Algeria agreement: Euro-Mediterranean association agreement

2002/0077(AVC) - 18/07/2005 - Final act

PURPOSE : to conclude a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with Algeria.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Council Decision 2005/690/EC on the conclusion of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, of the other part

CONTENT : The Council adopted this Decision concluding a new Euro-Mediterranean association agreement with Algeria. The agreement, signed in 2002, is intended to strengthen the bilateral relations by institutionalizing closer co-operation in political, economic and social areas. It will commit both sides to further liberalisation of bilateral trade in goods, services and capital and will help to ensure that European and Algerian business communities and consumers benefit from the further development of international trade and investment.

The agreement will enter into force on 1 September 2005. Negotiations between the EU and Algeria started in 1997 and were concluded in 2001. The new agreement will replace an existing co-operation agreement dating from 1976.

The main components of the Agreement are as follows:

-Regular political dialogue.

-A free trade area, to be established in stages, in accordance with WTO rules, between the Community and Algeria, over a maximum period of 12 years.

-With regard to industrial products, the preferential arrangements for Algerian products introduced under the 1976 Cooperation Agreements are confirmed. Algeria will liberalise the arrangements applying to imports of EU origin on a reciprocal basis. The liberalisation will be phased according to the sensitivity of the products.

-Specific reciprocal concessions are proposed for agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fishery products. The Parties will consider new reciprocal concessions within five years of the entry into force of the Agreement.

-The Agreement contains provisions related to free trade in goods in the areas of liberalisation of the provision of services, capital movements, competition rules, intellectual property rights and public procurement.

-The objective of economic cooperation will be to support Algeria's own efforts to achieve sustainable economic and social development. The 1976 Cooperation Agreements set out the main themes of action on economic cooperation: industrial, scientific, technical and technological cooperation, environmental protection, cooperation on fisheries, energy, promotion of regional cooperation and boosting private investment. The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement will strengthen this type of cooperation. New themes are also being introduced: education and training, standardization and conformity assessment, approximation of legislation, financial services, agriculture, transport, telecommunications and information technology, tourism and customs.

-The provisions concerning workers in the 1976 Cooperation Agreement are maintained, notably those relating to non-discrimination in respect of conditions of work, pay and dismissal and social security provision. In addition to these, the new Agreement will introduce social cooperation.

-With a view to achieving the Agreement's objectives, financial cooperation will be implemented for

Algeria. This will in particular entail modernising the Algerian economy, upgrading economic infrastructure, promoting private investment and job-creating activity, taking into account the effects of the gradual creation of a free trade area on the economy and flanking measures to support social policy.

-The Agreement contains extensive provisions on cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs, which is one of its most important features. Institution-building and strengthening the rule of law are the cornerstones of action in this field. On the subject of movement of persons, both parties have agreed to examine ways of simplifying and speeding up procedures for issuing visas to those contributing to the implementation of the Agreement. Cooperation in the area of control and prevention of illegal immigration will be given effect through the negotiation of readmission agreements. Cooperation is also envisaged in the legal and judicial field and in the areas of organised crime, money-laundering, racism and xenophobia, drugs and drug addiction and corruption. In the area of action against terrorism, cooperation will be implemented in compliance with international conventions and in the framework of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Association Council will meet at ministerial level once a year where possible to discuss the major problems arising in the framework of the Agreement and issues of mutual interest.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : The Agreement must be ratified by all Member States.