EC/Lebanon agreement: Euro-Mediterranean association agreement

2002/0083(AVC) - 14/02/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE : to conclude a Euro-Mediterranean association agreement with Lebanon.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Council Decision 2006/356/EC concerning the conclusion of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Community and its Member States of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part.

CONTENT : the Council adopted a decision approving a Euro-Mediterranean association agreement between the EU and Lebanon, signed in Luxembourg on 17 June 2002. The agreement is aimed at providing political dialogue, establishing conditions for the gradual liberalisation of trade in goods, services and capital and promoting economic, social, cultural, financial and monetary cooperation.

The EU-Lebanon Agreement is similar in content and pattern to the other association agreements in the region. It will have an unlimited duration and focuses on the following main elements:

1) a regular political dialogue;

2) economic, social and cultural dialogue;

3) a progressive establishment of a free-trade area between the EC and Lebanon over a maximum period of 12 years, in conformity with WTO rules:

- for industrial products, the preferential regime accorded to Lebanese exports to the Community under the 1978 Co-operation Agreement is reconfirmed. Reciprocally, Lebanon will liberalise its import regime for Community products so that tariffs are reduced to zero by the end of the 12 year transition period after entry into force of the Agreement;

- for processed agricultural products, specific reciprocal concessions are foreseen;

- agricultural products from Lebanon to the EC will be liberalised, except for a list of sensitive products for which zero tariff quotas will apply. Products from the EC will enter Lebanon on a concessional basis. New reciprocal tariff concessions will be examined by both sides five years after entry into force of the Agreement;

4) provisions for enhanced regional co-operation, including the creation of a regional Euro-Mediterranean free trade area;

5)provisions on the movement of persons, the rights of establishment, the supply of services, payments, competition, the movement of capital, intellectual property protection, and public procurement;

6) provisions for economic and financial cooperation in several sectors, including environment, culture, tourism, energy and investment;

7) commitments and cooperation in the control of illegal immigration and in re-admission, drugs and organised crime and money laundering.

There are also provisions on the establishment of an Association Council and an Association Committee. The Association Council will take measures to promote cooperation between the European Parliament and the Lebanese Parliament.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : the Agreement enters into force on the first day of the second month following the date on which the Parties notify each other that the Agreement has been approved by the Parties in accordance with their own procedures.