

# **EU/Central America Association Agreement: accession of Croatia to the EU. Protocol**

2020/0024(NLE) - 13/02/2020

**PURPOSE:** to conclude a Protocol to the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Central America, of the other part, to take account of the accession of Croatia to the European Union.

**PROPOSED ACT:** Council Decision.

**ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:** the Council may adopt the act only if the European Parliament has given its consent.

**BACKGROUND:** the Agreement establishing an Association between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and Central America, of the other part, was signed on 29 June 2012 and has not yet fully entered into force, as some Member States have yet to ratify it.

In accordance with the Act of Accession of Croatia, Croatia has undertaken to accede to the existing agreements concluded or signed by the Member States and the European Union with third countries by means of protocols concluded by the Council, acting unanimously on behalf of the Member States, with the third countries concerned.

On 14 September 2012, the Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with the third countries concerned with a view to concluding the corresponding protocols. Negotiations with Central America started in May 2014 and were successfully concluded in June 2018. The text of the Protocol to the Association Agreement, which takes into account the accession of Croatia to the European Union, was finalised by both parties on 27 June 2019 in the framework of the Association Committee meeting.

**CONTENT:** the Commission recommends to the Council to adopt the Council Decision on the conclusion of the Protocol on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Through the proposed Protocol, Croatia would be integrated into the Association Agreement with Central America as a Party.

The Commission considers the outcome of the negotiations to be satisfactory. In particular, as regards bananas imported from Central America, the Parties agreed to modify the trigger import volumes provided for in the stabilisation clause beyond which the EU may suspend the preferential tariff treatment. The preferential customs duty remained unchanged.