

EC/Algeria agreement: Euro-Mediterranean association agreement

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PURPOSE: To propose a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. **CONTENT:** The European Commission has been conducting on-going negotiations with the Republic of Algeria since 1996 with the remit to finalise a new Association Agreement between the two bodies. It will replace the Co-operation Agreement and the Agreement on ECSC products signed in 1976 both of which are still in force. The Agreement will be concluded for an unlimited duration and will help strengthen existing ties between the Community and Algeria by establishing relations based on reciprocity and partnership. Respect for human rights and democratic principles will play an essential element. The main components of the Agreement are: - Regular political dialogue. - A free trade area. It will be established over a period of 12 years and in accordance with WTO rules. - Provisions on services, capital movements, competition rules, intellectual property rights and public procurement. - Supporting sustainable economic and social development, with the introduction of new elements relating to education and training, standardisation and conformity assessment, approximation of legislation, financial services, agriculture, transport, telecommunications and information technology, tourism and customs. - Provisions on workers. - Extensive provisions on Justice and Home Affairs - indeed this is deemed one of its most important features and includes co-operation in the area of control and prevention of illegal immigrations, organised crime, money-laundering, racism, xenophobia, drugs and drug addiction and the fight against terrorism. - Standard and general institutional provisions such as annual ministerial meetings. In light of the satisfactory conclusions reached between the Community and Algeria the Commission urges the Council, following the consent of the European Parliament, to approve the signature for the Agreement and conclude the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement as soon as possible. Ratification by all Member States is a prerequisite for the entry into force of the Agreement.