



Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2150(INI)	Procedure completed
EC/Syria agreement: negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement		
Subject 6.40.05.04 Relations with the countries of the Mashreq		
Geographical area Syria		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFET Foreign Affairs		18/01/2005
		PSE DE KEYSER Véronique	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	External Relations	FERRERO-WALDNER Benita	

Key events			
19/06/2006	Non-legislative basic document published	B6-0373/2006	Summary
06/07/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
05/10/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
11/10/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0334/2006	
25/10/2006	Debate in Parliament		
26/10/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
26/10/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0459/2006	Summary
26/10/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2150(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure

Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 134o
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFET/6/38255

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		B6-0373/2006	19/06/2006	EP	Summary
Committee draft report		PE376.327	23/06/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE378.695	21/09/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0334/2006	11/10/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0459/2006	26/10/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)5316-2	23/11/2006	EC	

EC/Syria agreement: negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement

Mrs Véronique DE KEYSER (PES, B) made a proposal for a recommendation to Council on the negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, and Syria, pursuant to Rule 114(1) of the Rules of Procedure.

In her proposal, Mrs De KEYSER called on the Council to step up its efforts towards the signing of the agreement, and to take account of the following recommendations:

- to be mindful of the fact that, while the draft accord between the European Union and Syria is modelled on the other Euro-Mediterranean association agreements in force, it also contains new provisions, relating inter alia to non-proliferation of weapons, the fight against terrorism, reduction of customs tariffs, and the right of establishment, which has made the negotiations more complex;
- to take account of the political signals emerging from the 10th Ba'ath Party Regional Congress, the most visible of which is the introduction of a new and younger leadership;
- to take steps with the Syrian Government to ensure that it lifts the state of emergency, which would help the rule of law to progress, while respecting the spirit of Article 2 of the agreement.

At the same time, Parliament pointed out that Syria was currently in a period of transition which may lead it towards a social market economy, a more democratic political regime and greater respect for human rights. The future association agreement and the strengthening of relations between the European Union and Syria in permanent mutual respect may enable this development to be sustained.

The final conclusions of the International Independent Investigation Commission into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri are a decisive factor in the signing and ratification of the association agreement.

EC/Syria agreement: negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Véronique DE KEYSER (PSE, BE) containing Parliament's recommendation to the Council on the conclusion of an EU-Syria Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement.

The committee expressed its conviction that the association agreement could give a "decisive impetus" to the political, economic and social reforms needed to improve the situation in Syria. It reiterated, however, that respect for democratic values, human rights and civil liberties were prerequisites and that an effective control mechanism should therefore be included in the agreement's human rights clause. The report called in particular for greater respect for ethnic minorities and reiterated the need to maintain freedom of religion.

MEPs said that anchoring Syria firmly within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership would reinforce the country's relations with the Member States of the European Union and its partners in the Southern Mediterranean, and facilitate the Middle East peace process. The committee asked the Council to strengthen its initiatives "with a view to deepening the cooperation between the EU and Syria and ultimately signing that agreement", while taking account of a number of recommendations. These included:

- urging the Syrian Government to adopt measures in the fields of democracy and human rights so as to comply with international human rights law on freedom of expression, the protection of human rights defenders, the prevention of torture and the abolition of the death penalty;
- expressing "serious concerns" to the Syrian Government about the lack of progress in such areas as opening up to multi-party politics, and calling on it to respect its commitments within the framework of the Barcelona Process and to immediately lift the state of emergency;

- calling on the Syrian Government to report on the progress regarding respect for the rights of religious and other minorities and of the Kurds in particular;
- calling on Syria to respect Lebanon's security, refrain from interfering in its internal affairs, establish formal diplomatic relations with Lebanon and stop supporting Hezbollah;
- drawing the attention of Syria to "the importance of its potential role in the Near and Middle East" for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region.

Finally, the report asked the Council to consider "additional incentives and benefits for Syria, going beyond those granted through the association agreement, in order to encourage Syria to review its current foreign policy and regional alignment in ways that will help promote regional peace, stability and prosperity and, in particular, recognition of the State of Israel's right to exist and support by Syria for progress in the Middle East peace process".

EC/Syria agreement: negotiations with a view to the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report by Véronique DE KEYSER (PSE, BE) containing Parliament's recommendation to the Council on the conclusion of an EU-Syria Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement. (Please see the summary of 05/10/2006.) The report adopted by 453 votes in favour to 11 against with 15 abstentions.