

EU/Morocco agreement: reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products (replacing Protocols 1, 2 and 3, their Annexes and amendments to the EC/Morocco Euro-Mediterranean Agreement)

2010/0248(NLE) - 16/09/2010 - Preparatory document

PURPOSE: the conclusion of an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the EU and Morocco concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural and fishery products, the replacement of Protocols 1, 2 and 3 and their Annexes and amendments to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an EU-Morocco Association.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: Article 16 of the [Euro-Mediterranean Agreement](#) establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Morocco, of the other part, which has been in force since 1 March 2000, provides that the Community and Morocco will gradually implement greater liberalisation of their reciprocal trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products.

On 14 October 2005, the Council authorised the Commission to conduct negotiations within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean agreement with Morocco, in view of the progress made by Morocco as regards the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan, adopted in July 2005, in order to achieve greater liberalisation of reciprocal trade in agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products, in the spirit of the Barcelona Process and in line with the principles of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs (Luxembourg - May 2005).

On 14 December 2009, the Commission concluded negotiations on behalf of the Union on an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters with a view to amending the Association Agreement with Morocco, which now needs to be approved on behalf of the EU.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: no impact assessment was undertaken.

LEGAL BASE: the first subparagraph of Article 207(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in conjunction with Article 218(6)(a) thereof.

CONTENT: the purpose of this proposal is the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of the Exchange of Letters between the EU and Morocco concerning reciprocal liberalisation measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products, the replacement of Protocols 1, 2 and 3 and their Annexes and amendments to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Morocco, of the other part.

The draft agreement is based on the conclusions of the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in Venice of 27 November 2003 which provides that action should be taken with regard to the following areas:

- sanitary and phytosanitary measures,
- the approximation of technical standards,
- the harmonisation of legislation, and
- the protection of geographical indications.

In order to implement the results of the negotiations concluded with Morocco, the Commission proposes to the Council that the following technical changes are made to the Association Agreement:

- the replacement of Protocols 1, 2 and 3 and their annexes,
- the repeal of Article 10,
- the amendment of the title of Chapter II, the
- amendment of Articles 7, 15 and 17 and
- the amendment of Article 18(1).

The intention of both sides is that this Agreement should enter into force from 1 January 2011.

Furthermore, to reinforce the existing cooperation on sanitary and phytosanitary issues and issues relating to technical barriers to trade, specific provisions are added to Article 3 of Title II of the Protocol 1 of this Agreement.

Regarding the protection of geographical indications and denominations of origin, the Parties have agreed to open negotiations no later than one year after the entry into force of this Agreement.

The agreement also includes provisions to enable the EU to introduce safeguard measures in regard to the agricultural products, fish and fishery products, covered by the Association Agreement.

The Council is requested to adopt the proposed decision after the approval of the European Parliament.

BUDGETARY IMPACT: the proposal has no impact on the EU's budget.