



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 9.12.2004
COM(2004) 792 final

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the position to be adopted by the European Community and its Member States within the Association Council established by the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part, with regard to the adoption of a Recommendation on the implementation of the EU-Tunisia Action Plan

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The 2002 Copenhagen European Council, closing accession negotiations with ten applicant States, recognised that enlargement presented an important opportunity to take forward relations with neighbouring countries based on shared values, and stated that the Union remained determined to avoid new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union.

The Commission Communication “Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours” of March 2003¹ proposed the establishment of Action Plans with partner countries. On 16 June 2003, the Council welcomed this Communication and invited the Commission, with the contribution, where appropriate, of the High Representative, to present proposals for Action Plans for all countries concerned as appropriate, commencing with Ukraine, Moldova, and Southern Mediterranean partners with Association Agreements.

On 14 June 2004, the Council welcomed the Commission Communication “European Neighbourhood Policy – Strategy Paper”². The Council also welcomed the Commission proposal to pursue the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) through Action Plans to be agreed jointly with the neighbouring countries concerned and invited the Commission to propose such Action Plans. Action Plans should have a minimum duration of three years and be subject to renewal by mutual consent. They should be based on common principles but be differentiated, as appropriate, taking into account the specificities of each neighbour, its national reform processes and its relations with the EU. Action Plans should be comprehensive but at the same time identify clearly a limited number of key priorities and offer real incentives for reform. Action Plans should also contribute, where possible, to regional cooperation. The Council also defined how to advance and monitor implementation of action plans.

The Commission, in close cooperation with the Presidency and the High Representative on issues related to political cooperation and the CFSP, has held exploratory talks with Tunisia which have resulted in agreement on a draft Action Plan. It covers a timeframe of three to five years. Its implementation will help fulfil the provisions in the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement and will contribute to an increasingly close relationship with Tunisia, involving a significant degree of economic integration and a deepening of political co-operation. Implementation of the Action Plan will significantly advance the approximation of Tunisia’s legislation, norms and standards to those of the European Union.

The Action Plan is a broad tool for economic and political co-operation, carrying to a further stage the commitments and objectives contained in the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement.

¹ COM(2003) 104.

² COM(2004) 373.

In accordance with the Council Conclusions of 14 June 2004, stipulating that the Action Plans will be approved by the Council and subsequently endorsed by the respective Association or Co-operation Councils, the Commission attaches the text of a proposal for a Council Decision on the position to be taken by the European Community and its Member States within the EU-Tunisia Association Council with regard to the adoption of a Recommendation on the implementation of the Action Plan in annex.

The Commission therefore requests the Council to adopt the attached proposal for a Council Decision.

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on the position to be adopted by the European Community and its Member States within the Association Council established by the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part, with regard to the adoption of a Recommendation on the implementation of the EU-Tunisia Action Plan

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to Article 2 (1) of the Council and Commission Decision 98/238/EC, ECSC of 26 January 1998 on the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part;

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, in particular Article 15 thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission³;

Whereas:

- (1) The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part, was signed on 17 July 1995 and entered into force on 1 March 1998;
- (2) The Parties intend to agree on an EU-Tunisia Action Plan, which will support the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement through the elaboration and agreement of concrete steps towards attainment of its objectives.

³ OJ C [...] from [...], p [...]

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The position to be adopted by the European Community and its Member States within the Association Council established by the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Tunisia, of the other part, with regard to the implementation of the EU-Tunisia Action Plan shall be based on the draft Recommendation of the Association Council annexed to this Decision.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President