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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 19.8.2008
COM(2008) 524 final

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on a Community position in the Joint Committee on the implementation of Article 66 of the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, on the other part

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The Interim Association Agreement forms the legal basis for the bilateral relations between the European Union and the Palestinian Authority (PA).
2. Article 66 the Interim Association Agreement provides for the setting up of the necessary bodies for its implementation.
3. An institutional structure consisting of a number of subcommittees has been set up for the implementation of other Euro-Mediterranean partner countries, such as Israel, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon. The present proposal largely follows the same scheme and structure.
4. The Palestinian Authority is willing to strengthen cooperation in the various areas covered by the provisions of the Interim Association Agreement. Under the European Neighbourhood Policy, moreover, the aim is for the bilateral relations between the EU and the Palestinian Authority to develop into an overall partnership with a coherent approach guaranteed by close and permanent coordination of all the various elements.
5. In view of the above, the European Commission proposes to the Council that four subcommittees be set up to support the Joint Committee in the implementation of the Interim Association Agreement and the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan. The subcommittees will discuss matter of a technical nature that cannot be fully dealt with in the framework of the Joint Committee.
6. The four subcommittees proposed will cover: (i) Economic and Financial Matters, Trade, Customs Issues; (ii) Social Affairs; (iii) Energy, Environment, Transport, Science and Technology; (iv) Human rights, good governance and rule of law.
7. The objective, the subjects covered by each subcommittee and the implementing procedures are contained in the rules of procedure annexed.

Proposal for a

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on a Community position in the Joint Committee on the implementation of Article 66 of the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, on the other part

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community and, in particular the second subparagraph of Article 300 (2) thereof;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission¹,

Whereas:

- (1) The Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, was signed on 24th February 1997 and entered into force on 1st July 1997,
- (2) Article 66 of that Agreement provides for the setting up of committees (hereafter referred to as subcommittees) to assist the Joint Committee in carrying out its duties,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The position to be adopted by the Community in the Joint Committee established by the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, on the implementation of Article 66 of the Agreement, shall be based on the draft Decision of the Joint Committee annexed to this Decision.

The sub-committees to be set up shall be chaired by a European Commission representative on behalf of the European Community.

The Decision shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, [...]

For the Council
The President
[...]

¹ OJ C [...], [...], p. [...].

ANNEX A

Draft

DECISION OF THE EC-PLO JOINT COMMITTEE

Setting up Interim Association Committee subcommittees

The Joint Committee of the Interim Association Agreement between the EC and the PLO (for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority),

Having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part,

Whereas:

- (1) The EU's relations with the southern Mediterranean countries are becoming increasingly complex as a result of the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreements and the continuation of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Furthermore, the functioning of the European Neighbourhood Policy and its Action Plans in a wide range of sectoral areas requires the establishment of the proposed subcommittees.
- (2) Whereas the EC-PLO Interim Association Agreement has entered a new phase of implementation in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy and developments in the region.
- (3) Article 66 of the Agreement provides for the setting up of any other committee (hereafter referred to as subcommittees) that can assist it in carrying out its duties,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Sole Article

The subcommittees of the EC-PLO Joint Committee listed in Annex 1 are hereby set up and the rules of procedure of those subcommittees in Annex 2 hereby adopted.

The subcommittees shall work under the authority of the Joint Committee, to which they shall report after each of their meetings. The above-mentioned subcommittees shall have no decision-making power.

The Joint Committee shall take any action needed to ensure that they operate properly. The Joint Committee may decide to set up further subcommittees or groups or to abolish existing subcommittees or groups.

This Decision shall enter into force on the day of its adoption.

Done at [...]

For the Joint Committee

ANNEX I

EC-PLO INTERIM ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT

SUBCOMMITTEES ATTACHED TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

1. Economic and Financial Matters, Trade, Customs Issues
2. Social Affairs
3. Energy, Environment, Transport, Science and Technology
4. Human rights, good governance and rule of law.

ANNEX II

Rules of procedures

Subcommittee of the EC-PLO Joint Committee

Economic and Financial Matters, Trade, Customs Issues

1. Composition and chair

The subcommittee shall be composed of representatives of the European Community and representatives of the Palestinian Authority. It shall be chaired alternately by the two parties.

2. Role

The subcommittee shall work under the authority of the Joint Committee, to which it shall report after each meeting. The subcommittee does not have any decision-making power but may submit proposals to the Joint Committee.

3. Subject matter

The subcommittee shall discuss the implementation of the Interim Association Agreement and the related European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan including in the areas listed below and shall assess progress on the objectives and actions which have been identified and agreed upon in the Action Plan. Where relevant, co-operation in public administration matters shall be discussed. The subcommittee shall examine any problems that may arise in the sectors listed below and shall suggest possible steps to be undertaken.

- (a) Financial Accountability and Sound Management of Public Finances
- (b) Economic Reform and Development
- (c) Market and Regulatory Reform
- (d) Trade-related Issues
- (e) Customs Issues
- (f) Industry and small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- (g) Agriculture and fisheries
- (h) Statistics

The above list is not exhaustive and other subjects, including horizontal matters, may be added by the Joint Committee.

The subcommittee may discuss matters relating to one, several or all of the above sectors.

4. Secretariat

An official of the European Commission and an official of the Palestinian Authority shall act jointly as permanent secretaries of the subcommittee.

All communications concerning the subcommittee shall be forwarded to the secretaries.

5. Meetings

The subcommittee shall meet whenever circumstances require. A meeting may be convened on the basis of a request from the chairperson of either party, channelled through their secretary, who will pass the request onto the other party. Upon receipt of a request for a subcommittee meeting, the secretary of the other party shall reply within fifteen working days.

In cases of particular urgency, subcommittees may be convened at shorter notice subject to the agreement of both parties. All requests to convene meetings should be in writing.

Each meeting of the subcommittee shall be held at a time and place agreed by both parties.

The meetings shall be convened by the secretary in charge in agreement with the chair. Before each meeting, the chair will be informed of the intended composition of the delegation of each party.

If both parties agree, the subcommittee may invite experts to its meetings to provide the specific information so requested.

6. Agenda of the meetings

All requests for items to be included in the subcommittee agenda shall be forwarded to the secretaries.

A provisional agenda will be drawn up by the chair for each meeting. It shall be forwarded by the secretary in charge to his or her counterpart not later than ten days before the beginning of the meeting.

The provisional agenda shall include the items in respect of which the secretaries have received a request for inclusion in the agenda no later than fifteen days before the beginning of the meeting. Supporting documentation must be received by both parties at least seven days ahead of the meeting. To take account of urgent matters, these time limits may be shortened provided both parties agree.

The agenda shall be adopted by the subcommittee at the beginning of each meeting.

7. Minutes

Minutes shall be taken and agreed by both secretaries after each meeting. A copy of the minutes, including the subcommittee's proposals, shall be forwarded by the secretaries of the subcommittee to the secretaries and chair of the Joint Committee.

8. Publicity

Unless otherwise decided, the meetings of the subcommittee shall not be public.

Rules of procedures
Subcommittee of the EC-PLO Joint Committee
Social Affairs

1. Composition and chair

The subcommittee shall be composed of representatives of the European Community and representatives of the Palestinian Authority. It shall be chaired alternately by the two parties.

2. Role

The subcommittee shall work under the authority of the Joint Committee, to which it shall report after each meeting. The subcommittee does not have any decision-making power but may submit proposals to the Joint Committee.

3. Subject matter

The subcommittee shall discuss the implementation of the Interim Association Agreement and the related European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan including in the areas listed below and shall assess progress on the objectives and actions which have been identified and agreed upon in the Action Plan. Where relevant, co-operation in public administration matters shall be discussed. The subcommittee shall examine any problems that may arise in the sectors listed below and shall suggest possible steps to be undertaken.

- (a) Social development
- (b) Education and vocational training
- (c) Public Health
- (d) Culture
- (e) Youth

The above list is not exhaustive and other subjects, including horizontal matters, may be added by the Joint Committee.

The subcommittee may discuss matters relating to one, several or all of the above sectors.

4. Secretariat

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8. Publicity

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Rules of procedures
Subcommittee of the EC-PLO Joint Committee
Energy, Environment, Transport, Science and Technology

1. Composition and chair

The subcommittee shall be composed of representatives of the European Community and representatives of the Palestinian Authority. It shall be chaired alternately by the two parties.

2. Role

The subcommittee shall work under the authority of the Joint Committee, to which it shall report after each meeting. The subcommittee does not have any decision-making power but may submit proposals to the Joint Committee.

3. Subject matter

The subcommittee shall discuss the implementation of the Interim Association Agreement and the related European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan including in the areas listed below and shall assess progress on the objectives and actions which have been identified and agreed upon in the Action Plan. Where relevant, co-operation in public administration matters shall be discussed. The subcommittee shall examine any problems that may arise in the sectors listed below and shall suggest possible steps to be undertaken.

- (a) Energy
- (b) Environment including Water
- (c) Transport
- (d) Information Society and Audiovisual Policy
- (e) Science and Technology, Research and Development

The above list is not exhaustive and other subjects, including horizontal matters, may be added by the Joint Committee.

The subcommittee may discuss matters relating to one, several or all of the above sectors.

4. Secretariat

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If both parties agree, the subcommittee may invite experts from both sides to its meetings to provide the specific information and knowledge requested.

6. Agenda of the meetings

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Rules of procedures
Subcommittee of the EC-PLO Joint Committee
Human rights, good governance and rule of law

1. Composition and chair

The subcommittee shall be composed of representatives of the European Community and representatives of the Palestinian Authority. It shall be chaired alternately by the two parties.

2. Role

The subcommittee shall work under the authority of the Joint Committee, to which it shall report after each meeting. The subcommittee does not have any decision-making power but may submit proposals to the Joint Committee.

3. Subject matter

The subcommittee shall discuss the implementation of the Interim Association Agreement and the related European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan including in the areas listed below and shall assess progress on the objectives and actions which have been identified and agreed upon in the Action Plan. Where relevant, co-operation in public administration matters shall be discussed. The subcommittee shall examine any problems that may arise in the sectors listed below and shall suggest possible steps to be undertaken.

- (a) Human rights
- (b) Good governance
- (c) Rule of law

The above list is not exhaustive and other subjects, including horizontal matters, may be added by the Joint Committee.

The subcommittee may discuss matters relating to one, several or all of the above sectors.

4. Secretariat

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ANNEX

<u>FINANCIAL STATEMENT</u>					
				DATE:	
1. BUDGET HEADING:		APPROPRIATIONS:			
2. TITLE: Community position in the Joint Committee on the implementation of Article 66 of the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, on the other part					
3. LEGAL BASIS: Art. 66 of the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement					
4. AIMS: Setting up four sub-committees					
5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS		12 MONTH PERIOD	CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR 2008	FOLLOWING FINANCIAL YEAR 2009	
		(EUR million)	(EUR million)	(EUR million)	
5.0 EXPENDITURE					
- CHARGED TO THE EC BUDGET (REFUNDS/INTERVENTIONS)		n/a	n/a	n/a	
- NATIONAL AUTHORITIES					
- OTHER					
5.1 REVENUE					
- OWN RESOURCES OF THE EC (LEVIES/CUSTOMS DUTIES)		n/a	n/a	n/a	
- NATIONAL					
		2010	2011	2012	2013
5.0.1 ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE		-	-	-	-
5.1.1 ESTIMATED REVENUE		-	-	-	-
5.2 METHOD OF CALCULATION:					
6.0 CAN THE PROJECT BE FINANCED FROM APPROPRIATIONS ENTERED IN THE RELEVANT CHAPTER OF THE CURRENT BUDGET?				YES	
6.1 CAN THE PROJECT BE FINANCED BY TRANSFER BETWEEN CHAPTERS OF THE CURRENT BUDGET?				YES	
6.2 WILL A SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET BE NECESSARY?				NO	
6.3 WILL APPROPRIATIONS NEED TO BE ENTERED IN FUTURE BUDGETS?				NO	
OBSERVATIONS: The meetings of the sub-committees will take place in Brussels or in Ramallah. When in oPt, the mission budget of the participants will cover their expenses.					