

Association Agreements

Association Agreements are international agreements that the European Community / European Union has concluded with third countries with the aim of setting up an all-embracing framework to conduct bilateral relations. These agreements normally provide for the progressive liberalisation of trade (to various degrees: Free Trade Area, Customs Union...).

In certain cases, they prepare for future membership of the European Union. Although Association Agreements differ in their exact content and finality depending on the partner country, nevertheless, they meet the following criteria:

1. The legal basis for their conclusion is Article 310 (ex 238)TEC;
2. Intention to establish close economic and political cooperation (more than simple cooperation);
3. Creation of parity bodies for the management of the cooperation, competent to take decisions that bind the contracting parties;
4. Offering Most Favoured Nation treatment;
5. Providing for a privileged relationship between the EC and its partner;
6. Since 1995 the clause on the respect of human rights and democratic principles is systematically included and constitutes an essential element of the agreement;
7. In a large number of cases, the association agreement replaces a cooperation agreement thereby intensifying the relations between the partners.

Based on these criteria, the EU has concluded Association Agreements (albeit not always under the name "Association Agreement") with the following countries (the year of signing in brackets):

Agreements Establishing an Association:

Ankara agreement (Turkey '63)
Cyprus ('72) (no longer in force)
EEA Agreement '92 (Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein)

Cooperation Agreements

Algeria ('76), (no longer in force)
Morocco ('76), (no longer in force)
Egypt ('77), (no longer in force)
Syria ('77),
Tunisia ('69), (no longer in force)
Lomé ('75) (no longer in force)

Europe Agreements Establishing an Association (none of them is in force)

Poland, Hungary ('94),
Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia ('95),
Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia ('98),
Slovenia ('99)

Stabilisation and Association Agreements

fYRoM (2001),
Croatia (2001),
Albania (2006),
Montenegro (2007),
Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008),
Serbia (currently under negotiation)

Euro-Mediterranean Agreements Establishing an Association

Tunisia ('95),
Israel ('95),
Morocco ('96),
Palestinian authority ('97 Interim),
Jordan ('97),
Egypt (2001),
Algeria (2002),
Libya (2002),
Syria (currently under negotiation)

Agreement on trade, development and cooperation

South Africa ('99) (Amendment of the '99 agreement signed in 2009, not yet entered into force)

Partnership agreement

ACP (Cotonou 2000, revised in 2005)

Agreement establishing an association

Chile (2002)